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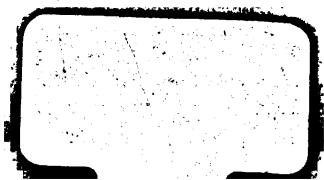
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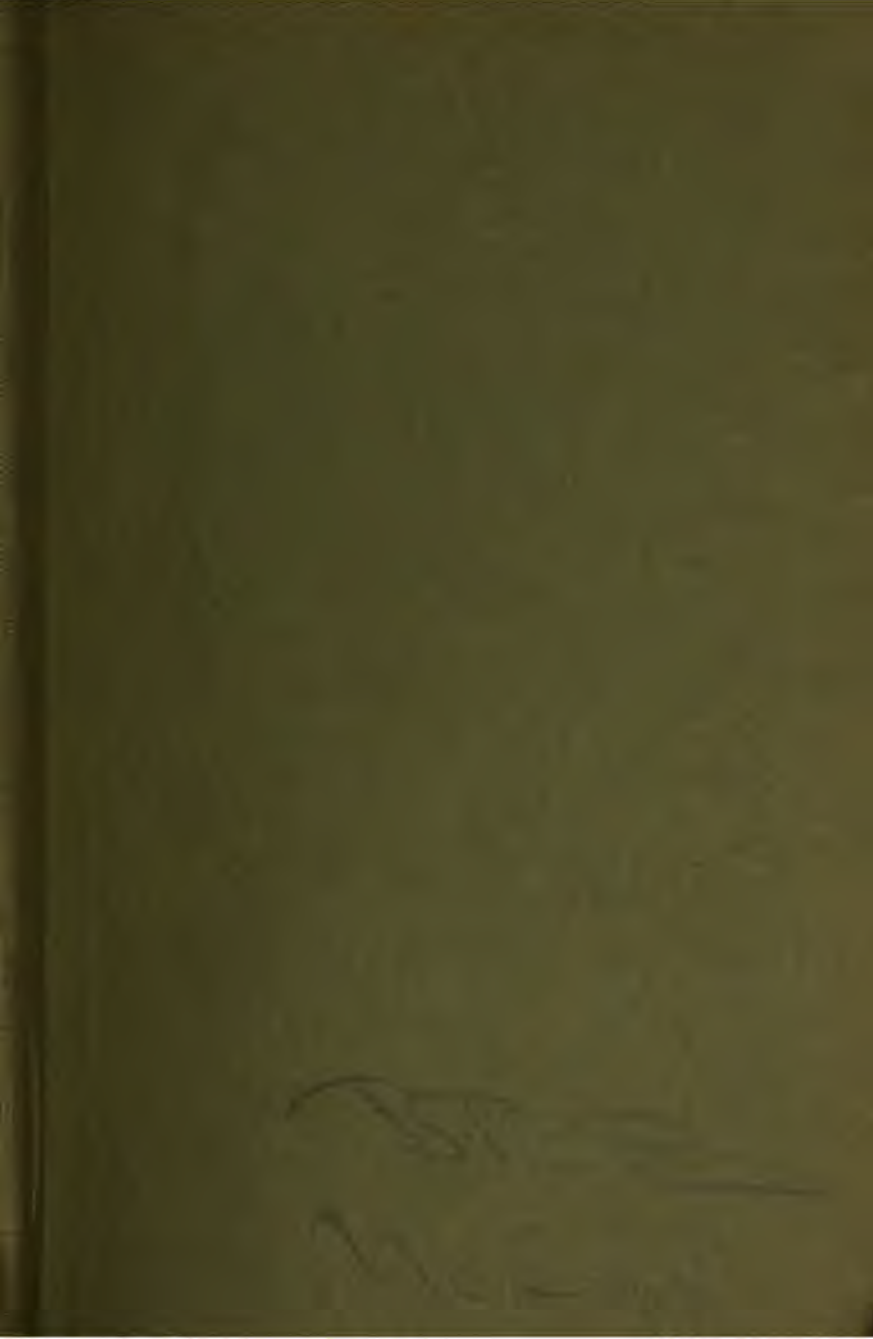
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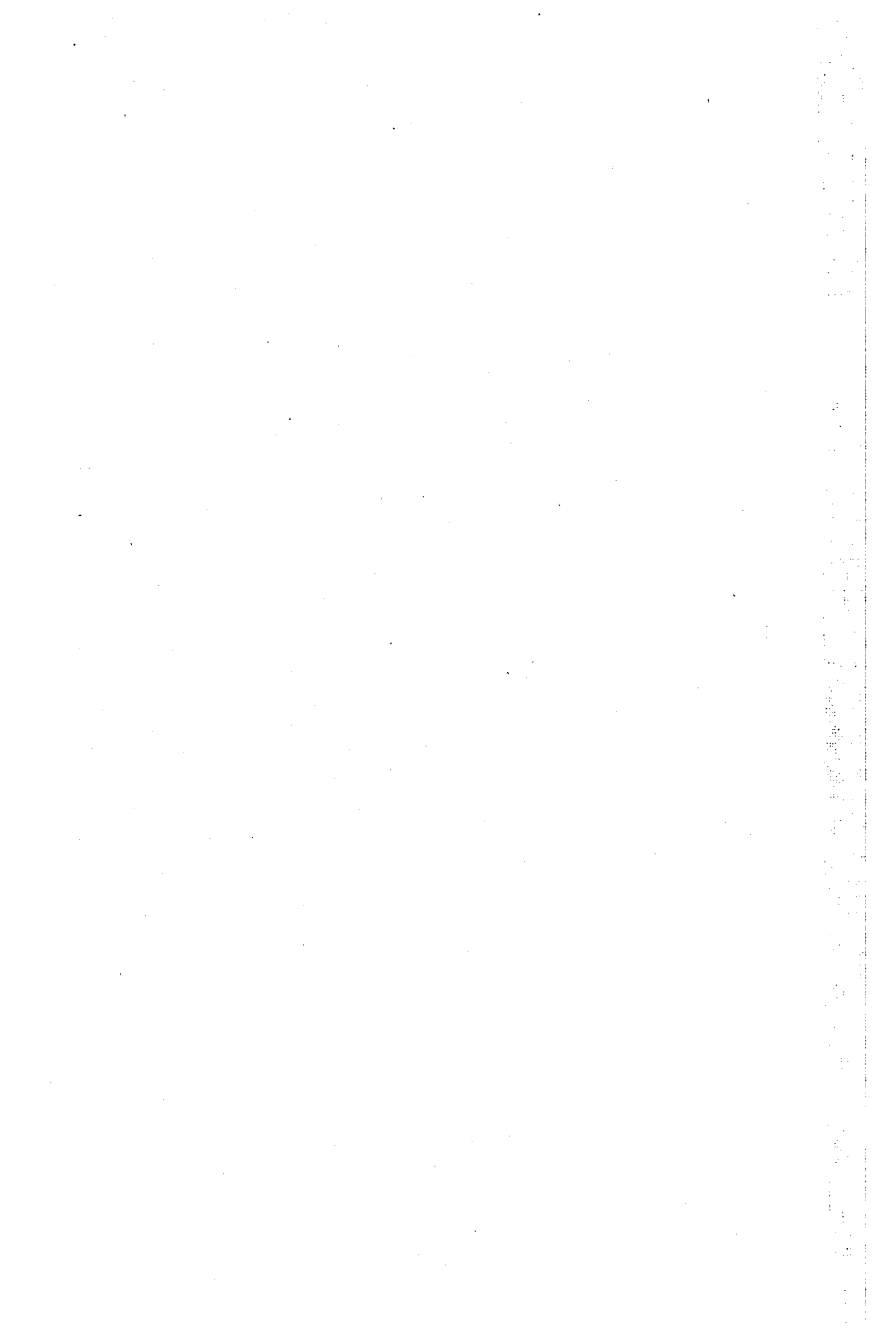
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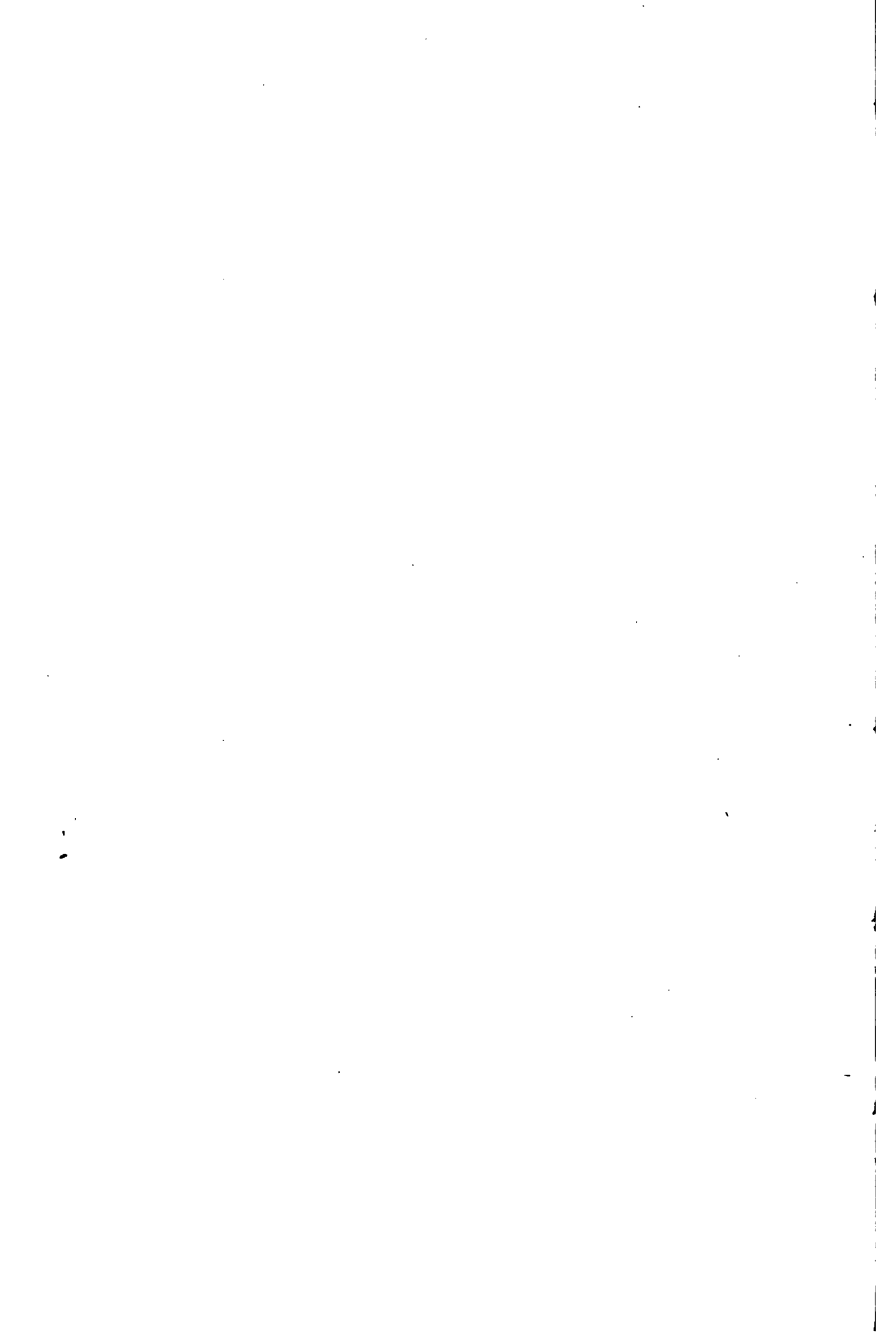






## KILTIE McCOY





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**Patrick Terrance McCoy**

# KILTIE McCOY

AN AMERICAN BOY WITH AN IRISH NAME  
FIGHTING IN FRANCE AS A  
SCOTCH SOLDIER

*By*  
PATRICK TERRANCE McCOY

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS



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## KILTIE McCOY





# KILTIE McCOY

## I

### CALLING JOHN BULL'S BLUFF

I MIGHT well, if I chose, charge a woman with the responsibility for my enlistment in the army of His Majesty, King George V of England. It was a charming little English matron, armed with a measly little white feather who fanned into a blaze of action the tiny flame that had long smoldered in my subconscious self. Adam blamed a woman, but Adam died quite a while ago as I remember the story. There was something, however, before the woman and her white feather, that actually brought me, an American citizen and proud of it, to enlist at the very outset of the world's greatest war, to leave my country, my flag, my citizenship, even my name, and to enter the service of the king of a foreign land.

'And that something was a knowledge of that great American game—you may call it penny-ante, draw, or just plain poker as you like—which prompted me to action.

If there is anything that makes me boiling mad, it is to have somebody steal a pot on a pair of deuces when I have jacks or better. So when John Bull tried

to bluff me, I just naturally called. That's why I now have a useless left arm and a record for having served more than two years in the world's greatest conflict, having been through more experiences than is usually allotted to the man who comes out alive. It happened this way.

I was born and reared in the little city of Holland, Michigan, where the principal excitement is going fishing and making furniture. My father's father was one of the original Holland settlers in that city and my dad was one of its most prominent lumbermen. On my mother's side, my grandfather was the Reverend Cornelius Vorst, a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. Since I was named for him, I suppose it had been the hope and expectation that I would follow him into the pulpit.

But my mind, early in life, turned to other channels. I loved excitement; I wanted to see the world as it is lived. The quietness of Holland irked me. I longed for action and action I could not get among the good folks of my native city.

I got it into my head I could sell goods, and it didn't take me long to act. My chance came and I took to the road. Then I began to see life as it is and covered pretty nearly all of America.

During my knocking around, I became acquainted with Jim Fischer. Jim was a British subject whose

home was in Lancashire, England. We became great pals, and I joined him in the publicity game at which he made his living. We were in New Orleans soon after the war broke out. There Jim received a cablegram ordering him to England to do publicity work for the British government.

"Come along with me," he said, "I can hook you on in some way."

You see, America was being flooded with German propaganda at that time. The idea of the British government was to start a campaign to counteract what Fritz was doing. Jim was to go to England, get the stuff to work with and return to America to launch the propaganda.

It didn't take me more than two seconds to decide. I went. Perhaps I knew even then in my subconsciousness that we would both enlist to help fight the Hun. At any rate we went over and the first of October, 1914, found me in London, surrounded everywhere with the atmosphere of war and preparation for war. Turn where I would, the cold piercing eye of Kitchener calling Englishmen to the defense of their country confronted me. More than half the men I met were already wearing the uniform of King George. The streets resounded day and night with the tramp of men in training. Some were in uniform; some were still in mufti, as the English call civilian

clothes, with khaki bands on the arm indicating they were in the service.

I used to watch them march by. They were a fine, husky, determined-looking lot of men. On their faces were written the evidences of the fighting blood, traditional with the Anglo-Saxon race. They were everywhere, training for the battle-fields of France, training to meet the Hun, to keep him from the sacred soil of England. It appealed to me. I was proud of the land of my birth. I could but feel that this was not merely a war between Germany, and England and France, but a war between the forces of barbarism and those of civilization. I began to see that it was the duty of every red-blooded man, American or not, to get in and do his bit toward the licking of Fritz. The intense call within me to help eradicate the Hun pest gripped me as it would have gripped you should you have been so near to the scene of activities.

But I was in the publicity game. I was getting ready to return to my own country to fight the Hun with printer's ink. So was Fischer. We were busy each day getting the material for our campaign in the United States. We had been in Scotland viewing the situation there and I had been struck by the sturdiness of the Scots and attracted by the traditions which everywhere go with the kilts.

But it was the little English woman with the measly

little white feather who changed all my plans, sent me to the trenches of France rather than to the comforts of America, to the excitement of the bomber's life rather than the tameness of the publicity game. It was that little English woman and her little white feather who fanned into life the dormant spark that had been smoldering within me, who made me a soldier of King George rather than a peaceful citizen of the United States.

It was the middle of October, 1914. I was walking down Piccadilly one fine morning. I had on a new suit of American clothes, and American clothes are so different from the English patterns that one can never be mistaken. I was an American in appearance and in thought, and on this particular morning I was feeling especially well satisfied with myself.

Possibly it was this glow of self-satisfaction which made me think that all the people who smiled as they passed me were admiring my big husky figure and well dressed appearance. Some were pleased even to the point of laughter.

So well satisfied was I with myself that as I passed a big plate-glass window, I paused to admire the reflection I saw there. But that admiration was choked at its birth. I felt the blood mount to my face; shame and indignation burned my whole body. There on my left shoulder hung a little white feather. It was

the same kind of white feather I had seen on many a stalwart Englishman in mufti. Often I had laughed and with some scorn when I had seen a woman toss one of these feathers with burr attached and had seen it fasten itself on some young man who ought to have been fighting the battles of his country. In those days Kitchener was calling for men and these decorations were numerous. I had mentally applauded when I had seen a woman thus show her contempt for the slacker.

'And now that plate-glass window showed me that I had also been decorated. At first I was filled with anger. I was an American; anybody could see that by my clothes. America was not at war; America was neutral. President Wilson had urged all Americans to be neutral in act and neutral in thought. They had no right to pin a white feather on me, an American citizen.

With some petulance I snatched the slacker sign from me, but again I caught that reflection in the window. It was a big husky figure I saw imaged there. It was the kind of man Kitchener was calling for. I had nobody in the world dependent upon me; I had always longed for excitement. The way was open for all the excitement I could wish. This was a war in which the future safety and peace of the world were the stake. America, eventually, would be in it—must be in it. Why should I not be in it now?

"I'll call your bluff, John Bull," I said as I moved along. "Your women can't pin white feathers on 'American citizens and get away with it. Americans never show the white feather. I'll call your bluff. I'll join up now."

Straightway I went back to the hotel and found Fischer.

"Jim, I'm going to enlist," I said abruptly. "Ink slinging is not what Fritz needs. He needs bullets and I'm going to sling bullets."

"Suits me," was Jim's prompt reply; "I'll go along with you."

He had had the same idea in mind all the time and after a few minutes' conversation we determined to go to Scotland and join up with the Kilties. That very night we left for Glasgow, arriving there Sunday morning. Here we met a lot of other fellows up there for the same purpose. Most of them were Scotchmen but some were English and some Irish.

All Sunday we sat around the hotel making our plans for the future and our brags as to what we would do when at last we got face to face with Fritz. If he could have heard what we said about him and the threats we made against him he would have crawled into his dugouts and called off the war.

"You'll have a hell of a time enlisting," said one of the bunch to me, as we sat talking.



"Why will I?" I asked with some petulance. "Guess you Englishmen will be glad enough to get a few husky Americans to help you out on this job." And I pulled myself up and patted my chest with pride. Then came the wallop that pretty nearly put me to sleep.

"They may intern you but they'll never enlist you with that name of yours. That 'Van' looks too much like 'von' to be popular in these parts," said the man who had questioned my ability to join up.

That set me to thinking. I had been having trouble with my name ever since I arrived in England. At every hotel when I gave my name as "Van Putten," they promptly produced a long blank for me to fill out. That blank called for my full name, birthplace, names and birthplaces of my parents and grandparents, what my business was and what right I had in England anyway. Then after it was all filled out, they would look at that "Van" and ask questions very apparently born of a suspicion that it should have been spelled with an "o" instead of with an "a."

"I'll change my blooming name," I said at length. "What shall it be now? I'll leave it up to the bunch to christen me."

That pleased everybody and they set about giving me all sorts of names.

"You look something like Kid McCoy," said one sporting man, after a bit.

"You've got wind and bluff enough to be P. T. Barnum," said another.

"P. T. McCoy shall be his name," shouted the crowd in chorus.

"What shall the 'P. T.' stand for?" I asked.

"Patr-r-r-ick Ter-r-r-ance," said a huge Scotchman with a burr under his tongue as big as your fist.

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" shouted a burly Irishman. "We've got to do this thing right."

With that he disappeared from the room, to return presently with a bottle of champagne in his hand. Under his direction, the crowd formed a circle, and I was made to kneel in the center with my hands clasped together. Then the Irishman poured the champagne over my head as he said in loud solemn tones:

"In the presence of God and these witnesses, I now christen thee Patrick Terrance McCoy. God save the King."

From that moment my old name was forgotten. They knew me thereafter only as Pat McCoy.

I went immediately to the hotel office and informed the clerk I had changed my name, which necessitated filling out another long blank that showed I had changed my name and why. But that done, I was officially registered as Pat McCoy and never again heard my former name until I reached Grand Rapids, Michigan, three years and a half later.

Next morning bright and early, Jim Fischer and I went to a recruiting office in Hamilton, a suburb of Glasgow, and were enlisted in the Cameronian Scottish Rifles which later became famous—or infamous—as the “Hard Luck Battalion.”

When I was asked my nationality, I drew myself up, stuck out my chest and announced boldly:

“American.”

The recruiting officer calmly laid down his pen, looked at me coldly for a minute and then said in icy tones:

“Go take a walk around the block and come back here a Canadian.”

Then it dawned on me that since America was still neutral, I could not be enlisted as an American. Accordingly I walked out, to return a minute later with a new nationality and a new place of residence. The recruiting officer, as if he had never seen me before, began all over. This time when he asked my name and residence I responded promptly:

“Patrick Terrance McCoy, Windsor, Canada.”

Everything was satisfactory now and I was told to strip for physical examination. I tipped the scales at one hundred and seventy-two pounds and as the surgeon finished his examination, he gave me a slap on the back that nearly raised a blister and said:

“I wish I had a few thousand more like you.”

Then he looked at my teeth and once more I might have lost my chance to serve in France, all because of pride in my nativity. You know the English people have notoriously poor teeth. When they get too bad, they have them extracted and false ones put in. When the surgeon looked at my teeth and found them filled with gold, he said:

"You're an American."

"Right you are," I said. But he was stone deaf in that ear and walked away without a word.

I had passed the examination and was accepted for service. They gave me the king's shilling and I took the oath of allegiance. Then they sent me away to the quartermaster's store house for a uniform.

I was now a British subject. I had cast away everything that man usually holds dear. My Holland birth was gone; my American citizenship was gone; my name, even, was gone. I was now Patrick Terrence McCoy, of Windsor, Canada, enlisted in the Cameronian Scottish Rifles in the service of His Majesty, King George V of England.

But one thing I had not cast away; I still possessed the pride of American birth and Holland ancestry. I had also a little American flag pin. As soon as my tunic was issued to me I pinned that flag to it and wore it continuously from that day until this. I wore it in training; I wore it in the trenches; I wore it in No

Man's Land as I lay out there alone and under fire, unable to get back to our own trenches and expecting death every minute. I wore it on many a bombing raid, and I wore it when at the Somme we made Fritz feel the might of our arms. More than one German may have seen that little American flag at the moment he also saw the point of my bayonet lunging toward him. I wore it in the hospital and I have it still. It was the one tangible all American thing that remained with me, and with which I would not and never did part.

## II

### FROM MUFTI TO KILTS

IF I live a thousand years I'll never forget my feelings as I looked over my new uniform of the Cameroonian Scottish Rifles.

Here was I, a big husky man who had always prided himself somewhat on being all man. Yet before me on the floor lay skirts, and I was expected to put them on.

Down at dear old 339, in Holland, Michigan, U. S. A., I have five sisters. Even so, I had never learned the intricacies necessary properly to robe one's self with skirts. One can never tell what one will be forced to undergo in this good old world.

I got into my clothes all right until it came to the skirts. I looked these over a long time wondering whether I was supposed to pull them on over my head or to step into them and yank them up. I was ashamed to ask anybody for I was ashamed to put them on anyway.

"Why, oh, why," I thought to myself, as I looked at that bunch of plaid, "did I ever enlist in a Scotch outfit? Why didn't I join up with an English regiment where they wear pants? Gee, but it's going to be cold. I can feel my knees freezing already."

I had more than one mind to cut and run for it and get into some regiment where they dressed like men.

"I suppose I'm in for it and must make good," I thought with a sigh, "but I'll gamble somebody'll be calling me Percy or Clarence or Molly or some other perfectly ladylike name when I get into these skirts—if ever I find out how *to* get into them."

Then I had a somewhat comforting thought. The kilties were usually called "Jock" or "Sandy" or some other equally masculine name and when I remembered the glorious record of the Scotch Highlanders, I began to feel a little less womanish about those skirts. At length I got up courage to ask a laddie how to get into the things.

It was Corporal Geordie Freeland who came to my aid. Now Geordie was the son of a Scotch Presbyterian minister and was himself a theological student when he joined up. Corporal Geordie was used to the kilts and when I said to him: "How do you get into these skirts? Do you pull 'em on over your head or step into 'em?" he looked at me with real compassion in his eyes and answered:

"Nither, me bra laddie. Open 'em up in front and pull 'em around you."

Then it was I discovered the kilts did open in front and that all I had to do was to "pull them

around" me like a coat and buckle them. Then there I was all dressed up like a perfect lady.

But my troubles were not yet ended, however. Before me lay a roll that looked like a bandage except that it was of wool and of the familiar khaki color. These, I discovered, were my puttees and were supposed to be wrapped spirally around my legs up to a little below the knees. No chance of keeping those knees under cover! I called Corporal Geordie again and he put them on me, explaining the method in his broad Scotch brogue, some of which I almost understood.

Geordie was my guardian angel, my dictionary and my know-it-all during the first two or three days while I was learning the ropes. In later weeks we became the closest friends. It was Geordie who is responsible for my crooked arm, the fact that I am out of the service for good and, perhaps, that I am alive.

It was more than two years after he had shown me how to get into my kilts and puttees that he caused me to become the target for one of Fritz's snipers. It was at Arras, Easter Monday morning, 1917. We were advancing between the third and fourth line German trenches. Geordie, then a sergeant, was on the extreme left of our company. I was a corporal in charge of bombers and on the extreme right. We were losing men rapidly and the bombardment was so intense that you could hardly hear yourself think.



Geordie, on the left, yelled to the man next on his right, "How's Pat McCoy?" The question was passed along up the line of perhaps a hundred and fifty men until it reached me. Instead of sending back my reply by the same relay method, I stepped out in front of the line a bit so I could see Geordie. Then I lifted my arm and waved to him to let him know I was still alive and still in the game. Hardly had I done so when "crack" came a sniper's bullet. It caught me just below the left elbow and put me out of the war. But I'm still alive, while I hear poor Geordie's ticket is up and he's sleeping "somewhere in France."

But back there in Hamilton and Glasgow we didn't have to worry about snipers. The first thing we had to do was to learn how to get into our new duds and how to use the equipment handed out to us. Geordie was my standby on these points.

I was at last all dolled up in mine. Then it was up to me to break out into the public gaze in my new scenery including those skirts. I stood in the doorway of the billet a long time before I could get up the courage to venture forth. I was sure I would be arrested and I was equally sure my legs would freeze. At last I took a long breath, pulled down my kilts a bit and stepped out. Everybody was looking at me, I knew. I could feel the blood rushing to my face in spite of myself. The fact that thousands more were



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dressed just like me didn't help at all, all eyes were centered on me and me alone.

Hardly had I stepped forth when a gust of wind whistled around my knees. Automatically I grabbed my skirts to hold them down. Then everybody laughed. I didn't know, as the others did, that there are twenty-four yards of cloth in those kilts and that they are so heavy that little short of a gale will blow them up. I braced and tried to walk as if I had worn kilts all my life. But every minute I would unconsciously reach down and try to pull the skirts over my knees. First I would grab at them behind, then in front, then on the sides. All the time a raw wind was whistling around my bare legs until I shivered with cold and nervousness.

The first time I sat down in those kilts, I acted like a little girl trying to pull her skirts down over her knees. I pulled mine down but as soon as I straightened up, the kilts straightened up, too. Many a time I said to myself: "I wish I had enlisted in a regiment that wears pants."

But you get used to anything and the novelty of the kilts wore off in a day or two. Besides we didn't have time to worry about whether we had kilts on or not, we were too busy. From five o'clock in the morning until nine at night we were on duty, and that duty with our big new boots and tender feet gave us all

the worry we could well attend to. You take a lot of store clerks, professional men and others unused to out-of-door life, load them down with the kind of boots we had to wear and drill them sixteen hours a day and they have little time to bother over kilts or anything else.

I didn't know anything at all about the military game when I joined up, and I'll never forget the mess I made of it and the bawling out I got when Sergeant Armstrong for the first time yelled at me: "R-r-right tur-r-rn," and I just naturally turned around.

For two weeks we did nothing but drill without arms, polish buttons and equipment and then be inspected and bawled out. You see, the English army way of inculcating the idea of discipline is to demand cleanliness of person and cleanliness of equipment carried to the extreme, with frequent inspections and fines if you fail to pass satisfactorily. Boots are black and must be polished. Buttons are bright and must be kept so. Cap badges are shining and must be kept shining. You must be shaved daily. Your hair must be cut according to regulation and frequently.

I got mine early. A veteran of many years' service in the English army quietly gave me the secret of a quick and easy polish for my cap badge. He confidentially informed me that if I would smear it with Brasso, known as "The soldier's friend," and then place

it over a gas-jet until the paste had burned in, all I had then to do was to dust it off and I'd have a bright and shining cap badge. I fell for it. When I went out for inspection soon after, my cap badge was perfectly black, and I knew I was in for it. The only question in my mind was how heavy my fine would be and what particular part of the billets I would have the honor of scrubbing.

I stood stiffly at attention as Captain Hay, who long since has clicked it, passed down the line inspecting. He paused in front of me, sized me up and down with a keen eye. His gaze fell upon that cap badge and stopped right there:

"What's the matter wi' yer cap badge?" he demanded coldly. "Did yer use cherry black on it this mornin'?"

"I was——" I began.

"Step oot," bawled the sergeant, to add to my confusion, for when a soldier in the British army is spoken to by an officer and replies, he must step smartly, two paces to the front. Promptly I did so and stood all alone out in front of the entire company, stuttering like a schoolboy and trying to present some sort of alibi.

Then I told him what had happened and how I came to try the gas-jet method of polishing my cap badge.

"That's a lazy man's way," came the sharp response. "I'll give you an order for a new cap badge and hereafter you polish it without the aid of the gas-jet."

He let me off easy—much easier than he did an American pal of mine, for there were five of us in that battalion. The English army officer is extremely fussy about the heels of your boots. If they are not well polished you are certain to get yours, good and plenty. Now my American pal had neglected to polish his heels. The officer had passed down the front of the line and was returning in the rear looking for unpolished heels.

He paused behind my friend.

"What's the matter with those heels?" he demanded severely.

Then it was the Yankee smart. Alec cropped out and all to the woe of the Yank.

"Sir, a good soldier never looks behind," he said.

"Take his name, Sergeant," said the captain. "We'll give him seven days in billet, without pay, to find out whether a good soldier ever looks behind."

When you're working for a shilling a day, you need all you can get and a seven days' fine puts a severe crimp in one's rating in *Dun's*.

The incident of the cap badge had not taught me my lesson, however. I guess I was not upholding the Yankee reputation for being smart.

Every article in your kit must be arranged in a certain order and a certain manner. Our knives, forks, spoons, razors, tooth-brushes, etc., must always be placed in just that order. I had again taken the advice of an old-timer and my kit was on the ground open for inspection with the position of the knife and fork reversed. I had been careful in arranging my things and was mentally pluming myself on the job.

Captain Hay came down the line with his little cane. He paused and looked at my kit critically.

"What's that fork doing there?" he said sharply, and with a sweep of his cane he mussed up all my things and the sergeant took my name.

For a time we put it over on the officers in one respect, but the first man caught may be scrubbing floors yet for all I know. It was required that our kits should be folded square and neat. Now this is not the easiest thing to do when you have all your junk to stow in it. So we contrived a plan to leave out all the stuff and put in the place of it a pillow or a square paste-board box. By this means we were able to present the neatest sort of kit for inspection purposes and at the same time have no load upon our backs.

But one day Captain Hay stopped behind Fred Thompson. Thompson had rather overdone the squareness and neatness.



"There's a perfect kit," said the captain, and Thompson immediately began seeing visions of Victoria crosses and marshal's batons and all sorts of things.

But Captain Hay struck the kit with his knuckle. It gave forth a hollow boom. Then we all knew it had happened and began thinking of scrubbing brushes and no pay.

"Ah, ha. So that's it, is it?" sneered the captain. "What have you got in that kit?"

"My kit, sir," responded Thompson, for he was an old-timer and had nerve.

"Step oot," roared the sergeant, and Thompson promptly stepped forward his two paces.

"We'll have kit inspection immediately," said the captain.

In another moment all the kits were open on the ground and thirty-two of them, including my own, gave up paste-board boxes, pillows and other contrivances for making nice-looking kits without weight. Oh, we did a fine turn of scrubbing for that, and afterward the kits were opened every day for inspection.

We were forever polishing boots and buttons and cap badges and standing at attention for inspection. We learned over in France that it was not required to polish except when detailed for guard duty at headquarters. Accordingly our yearning for the trenches was accentuated each day. We were willing to take

chances with shells and bullets if only to escape that eternal polishing.

Inspections came frequently from the very first, inspections by our own officers and by general officers who came for the purpose. Not long after we had begun training we were inspected by King George, and let me tell you something right here. I never was more willing to die than I was for that little man who occupies the throne of England and the British Empire. I'm proud, too, that I was able to do my bit for him, for he is the greatest little sportsman and gentleman in the world.

A short time before the king inspected us we were inspected by a general. He was due to arrive at a certain time and according to the British army regulations we were on the parade fully equipped, our ranks dressed straight as a string and at attention some minutes before the general was expected. For two hours we stood there, stiff as pokers, unable to relax even a little. The general was late. We were soft then, too, and that made the tension that much harder to bear. I never ached so in my life and I thought I never would get activity into my muscles again.

And when at last he came, we presented arms and he rode by on his horse, saluted the colonel and passed on without giving us a single look or acknowledging our salute.

Soon after this experience it was announced that the king was coming. With the remembrance of that other inspection still in our minds and muscles we began to grouse. Naturally I, an American, didn't have much use for that king job anyway and under the conditions most of the men in the battalion felt pretty much the same way about it.

So we sat around and polished buttons and boots and cap badges and rifles and cussed the kaiser, the war, the king and everybody else. If the general had been two hours late of course the king would exercise his divine prerogative and be at least four hours late. And if the general didn't notice us standing there at attention and half dead waiting for him, we had reason to expect the king would probably not even notice the colonel.

So we went out to the parade feeling anything but happy and not overly loyal toward King George. He was just a nuisance to us that morning. He was due to arrive at eleven A. M. We had been properly formed, our lines carefully dressed and had just taken our proper positions when, three minutes before the hour, he came upon the field.

I was in the front rank and had a good chance to see him. I had all sorts of ideas about what kings looked like but what I saw was a small, slight, unimpressive-looking man. There were no ermine robes about him, no lackeys fanning him, nobody kneeling in

front of him. He was clad in a field uniform, just like the most ordinary English Tommy. He was somewhat stooped and looked just about as human and commonplace as any man could.

We were standing stiffly at attention when he walked upon the field. The colonel promptly ordered: "Present arms," and we executed it.

Did King George recognize us? Bet your life he did! He saluted the colonel, faced the battalion and smartly saluted the men. Then he spoke to the colonel and what do you think King George of England said:

"Have the men stand at ease, Colonel."

In that moment, George V of England had won the hearts of the Cameronian Scottish Rifles. But that was not all. He personally told the men they might smoke if they desired while he was making the inspection. Do you think a man "lit up"? Not on your life! Every man there, whatever his feelings might have been before, had too much respect for that little man to smoke while he was making an inspection.

The king passed to the right of the line, and walking close up to the first man, stopped and said:

"You're a fine looking body of men. Are you being well cared for?"

You could see that soldier grow as he replied to his sovereign. And do you think he would have made a complaint? Not much.

Then the king passed down the front of the line.

He stopped at about every fourth or fifth man and talked with him personally. He stopped in front of the man next on my right. I was always sore because he missed me.

"Are you well cared for?" he asked. "How about your boots? Remember a soldier must have good boots, a good rifle and plenty of wholesome food. Are you getting all these things?"

I could feel that man swell up as he responded:

"Sir, yes, sir, Your Majesty."

As His Majesty walked along the line each man standing at ease, came to attention and so remained until the king had passed to the second man beyond him.

His Majesty looked over every man in the line and not until he had finished his inspection were we once more brought to attention to present arms in salute. The king saluted the colonel and again turned to salute us. I tell you he is the gamest little man in the world and when that battalion cut loose a cheer for him, if there was anybody who yelled any louder than I, it was because he had stronger lungs for I could say and still can say, "God save King George," and mean it with all my heart.

### III

#### THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

"FALL in."

The command was whispered in the darkness.

"No smoking and no talking."

This admonition was also given in a whisper.

"The wind is whistling *Yankee Doodle* between my knees," I mumbled, as a cold gust caught me.

"Make it whistle *Th' Bonnie Braes o' Scotland*," said a big Scotchman near me.

"Silence," bawled somebody from out the darkness in tones that could be heard all over the British Isles.

"Forr-r-red," came the whispered command.

Away we marched into the darkness, out of the billets and over to the beautiful estate of Lord Hamilton. It was so dark I could not see even my next man, for since the Zeps first raided England few lights are burned and these are carefully shaded.

Down along the road and through the beautiful woods of this fine old estate we tramped. The liquid mud sloshed around our feet and we had visions of boots to polish in the morning.

Somebody cursed gently.

"Silence, there," roared out of the darkness.

I reached out my hand to touch my next man. He was not there. I knew where he was. Up there in the angles of the old castle were the pretty maids of Lord Hamilton's household waiting for their soldier lovers.

We were in line advancing through the woods.

"Lie down," came the whispered order.

Around each of us were twenty-four yards of kilts, beneath us was mud and then more mud.

Lie down, and then spend all day to-morrow scrubbing kilts and ironing the pleats? Not much. I squatted on my knees, holding my kilts up around me; and everybody else did the same.

"Lie down," bawled Colonel Dykes, a little fellow about sixty years old but with more pep than most of us youngsters had. "You're under fire."

We couldn't see any shells so nobody worried.

A hand caught me in the back of the head. With a shove it sent me sprawling flat upon my face, full length into the soft mud.

"Lie down. You'll go down quick enough when Fritz gets to tossing real shells at you," said a voice from the dark; and one man after another was pushed upon his face into the ooze.

I was down. My kilts were smeared. I had an all day's job ahead of me washing and ironing that twenty-four yards of plaid and cleaning all the rest of

my equipment. It was not necessary for anybody to tell me to lie still. I lay there feeling the cold wet mud soak into my clothing and smear over my bare legs.

From somewhere a star shell went up. It looked like a sky-rocket left over from the first Fourth of July. The star shells we had when we first entered the war were so weak in comparison with those of the Germans that when we would send one up, Fritz used to light matches and hold them up above the parapet of his trenches in derision.

"Looks like Fourth of July," I said as I watched it.

"Shut up, you blooming Yank," said an Englishman next me as he reached over and kicked me.

"Fix bayonets," was the whispered order. We rolled over on our right sides in order to draw and fix the mud-covered bayonets.

Then came the order to move forward, crawling through the mud on our bellies. We moved. That is, most of us did. Some lay still there on the ground. They were not dead nor even theoretically wounded. A gentle snore from one showed what was the matter with all. A prodding with a mud-covered boot brought all to life in course of time.

So we crept forward, not knowing where we were going nor why. But we went.



"Charge!" bellowed the colonel; and with a yell we were up and rushing forward upon an unknown, unseen and purely mythical enemy located in an unknown position, and then it was all over.

Back to the billets we marched except those who had maneuvered out of the ranks and had gone home to sleep in warm soft beds and to sneak back into billets just before dawn in the morning.

It was a night maneuver, the kind we had frequently, in which we learned a vast number of things that we promptly unlearned as soon as we reached France and the real stuff.

It was good to get out of our wet and muddy clothes even if we couldn't forget that they must be washed in the morning. But the night was not over yet.

Hardly had we fallen asleep when we were turned out in a hurry again. Into those cold, wet, muddy clothes we climbed as fast as we could and turned out under arms.

"What's it all about?" we shivered.

"Zep raid," was the information we got.

All eyes were turned heavenward and all ears were strained to catch the whir of a motor or the explosion of a bomb. We could see nothing. We could hear nothing. Next day we found out why. The raid was over London, some two hundred and fifty miles

away, but it was orders that whenever a raid was on, the armed forces all over the British Isles must be turned out ready for eventualities. So we stood in the ranks a couple of hours more, cold and ugly—while the nearest excitement there was was down in London.

Next day we spent scrubbing, polishing and getting cleaned up and being inspected. That is, we occupied in this work all the time we had between the regular grind of drills.

That was only one kind of night maneuver. We had many. Perhaps the most heartbreaking kind was trench digging. Armed with picks and shovels we would go over to Lord Hamilton's estate and there in the darkness dig trenches. Next morning we would be marched back to look at our handiwork and—to fill them up again. We would find some of the trenches three feet deep and some of them only six inches. I noticed after we got into France, that the fellows who dug only six inches in Blighty could dig six feet in half the time when they had Fritz and shrapnel to cheer them on.

However, those six-inch trenches were always popular with us on the morning after. It was easy to fill them up while it took a lot of backache and agony of blistered hands to fill one three feet deep. And then there were the sand-bags! At night we filled

hundreds of them to build our parapets. In the morning we emptied them again.

One day was pretty much like every other during those six months in the training camp.

At five A. M. reveille was sounded, and we had biscuits and tea.

At five-thirty we began our hour of Swedish drill.

Six-thirty we were dismissed.

Seven A. M. breakfast. This almost always consisted of bread, jam, either bacon or porridge without sugar, and tea. At breakfast, too, the English idea of a joke was perpetrated for the first time in the day.

Under the British army regulations, it is required that at each meal the men shall be asked if they have any complaints to make. The orderly officer of the day always came in, took his place at the end of each table and in loud voice demanded:

“Any complaints?”

The orderly of the platoon addressed always jumped to his feet, stood at attention and we saw to it that he always had complaints to make.

“Sir, yes, sir,” he would say, “we had not enough bacon.”

“I’ll see what can be done about it,” was the stereotyped reply of the officer, as he passed on to the next table. But although we lay awake nights thinking of complaints to make, it was apparent the officer had mighty little influence with the powers-that-be for we

never got results from his promise to "see what could be done about it."

Breakfast over, we had time for a quick shave and to polish our boots and buttons.

At nine A. M. we fell in for inspection and woe be to the man who had failed to do a good job of polishing. We were paid a shilling a day for our service and the regulations require that no man shall receive less than one shilling a week. But it was perfectly easy to fine a man every cent of his pay except that one regulation shilling a week.

Inspection over, we were drilled. The captain would take a hand at it until he was tired, then he would command: "Carry on, Sergeant," and the sergeant-major would take up the burden. Perhaps the lieutenants would like to try it, and so they relayed on us while we had to stand it all.

At twelve noon we would have battalion parade and then be dismissed. But that dismissing business frequently cut short our dinner hour. In the British army when the battalion is dismissed, each man turns to the right, salutes smartly, and then falls out. It was a mighty blind officer, I soon learned, who couldn't find some Jock down the line who didn't turn or that didn't salute to suit him and so he would keep us turning and saluting fifteen or twenty times before, at last, we were allowed to fall out.

At twelve-thirty we dined. This consisted of bis-

cuits—and by biscuits I mean hardtack—stew, rice or sago pudding.

At two P. M. we were at it again.

This time we must march out to the field where we were taught bayonet fighting. We kept it up until four-thirty, including a short route march every day, and a longer one of from six to eight miles about twice a week.

At four-thirty we had a short rest and time to smoke. Then we marched back to billets in parade order and had just time to prepare for supper which consisted of bread, usually cold meat, jam and more tea. Never any coffee. Indeed it was impossible to get a cup of good American coffee in Scotland. Fischer and I tried it many a time but never got anything fit to drink.

Supper over, we were drilled again for an hour, this time by the colonel. If we had no night maneuver, we were supposed to be in bed at nine o'clock. At first this was the most welcome regulation on the book, but when we got hardened a bit, it went against the grain. In Scotland the evenings are very long and it is rarely dark before ten, but we, a bunch of big huskies, were tucked in bed while it was yet daylight.

We had been training only about a month when I was made a corporal. I was put to training the men in Swedish drill and bayonet fighting. I was one of the

biggest men in the battalion except for a few Scotch sheep herders who came down from the Highlands. These were the biggest and finest specimens of men I ever saw. Many of them were six feet, six and seven inches in height, and tougher than hickory.

They were a game lot, too; they never knew what "quit" meant. In teaching bayonet fighting we went through all the movements we thought we would be going through if attacking a German trench. We had dummies in front of the trenches, in the trenches and back of the trench. We would rush forward, look as fierce as we could, cuss if necessary to show hate, give a long point at the dummy in front, withdraw, rush forward yelling, leap down into the trench, stabbing a standing dummy as we went, stick the dummy lying prone in the trench, lift ourselves out and attack other dummies supposed to be Germans advancing to the relief of those in the trenches. It was hard work and quite realistic as far as we then knew.

I noticed one day that one of these big Scotchmen, a fellow named Livingston, was pretty slow getting up out of a trench after he had done his work.

"What's the matter there, Livingston?" I yelled. "What makes you so slow getting out of that trench?"

"I stuck my foot," he called back, and hobbled along.

I looked at his foot. The blood was spurting from

it, yet he kept on going. I ran up to him and questioned him about it. I found that in jumping into the trench he had plunged his bayonet clear through his foot, cutting veins, chords and bones. I ordered him to billet but he refused to go. I called a couple of men to carry him in but the big chap insisted he could walk and he did walk in that condition all the way to the hospital. Poor chap! He was unable to go to France when the rest of us went, and the man who had refused to quit with a wound that crippled him for life, cried like a baby when we went away and left him.

But my new honors did not bring unadulterated pleasure. Right soon after I had taken up the work, I was forced to send Fischer, my best friend and pal, to the guard room. Poor old pal! Somewhere over on the Somme front his body is buried minus his head, which a shell swept away. But I want to tell you the kind of fellow he was.

I had a squad out giving them bayonet drill. In that squad was Fischer. He was feeling a little grouchy that day perhaps and continually talked in the ranks. Twice I told him to keep still but he kept it up.

"Fischer, cut that talking in ranks," I commanded him.

"I won't if I don't want to," he said. "Nobody can make me either."

"I can make you shut up and I will," I answered.

"Nobody can make me shut up. You can't, nor the colonel can't. The king can't either," he growled.

Immediately I detailed two men and the lance corporal to take my best pal to the guard room, for it was a case of show-down now.

After drill as I was passing the guard room, Mickie Burns, the sergeant of the guard on duty, said to me:

"What about Fischer, Pat? I haven't 'crimed' him yet. You don't want me to do that, do you?"

"I don't care what you do to him," I answered, for I was a bit ugly.

"Oh, Pat," said Burns, "go in and see him. He wants to see you."

After a little pleading I went in.

"Pat," said Fischer, coming up to me, "I'm not asking you not to 'crime' me. I deserve that and all the punishment they may give me. I just want to apologize to you, old pal, for taking advantage of our friendship. I'll admit I did it intentionally because I thought you wouldn't do anything. I was wrong both ways. What I ask of you now is to let me apologize to the whole squad as soon as I get out of this."

"Go on! Get out of here," I said. "Beat it quick before I 'crime' you."

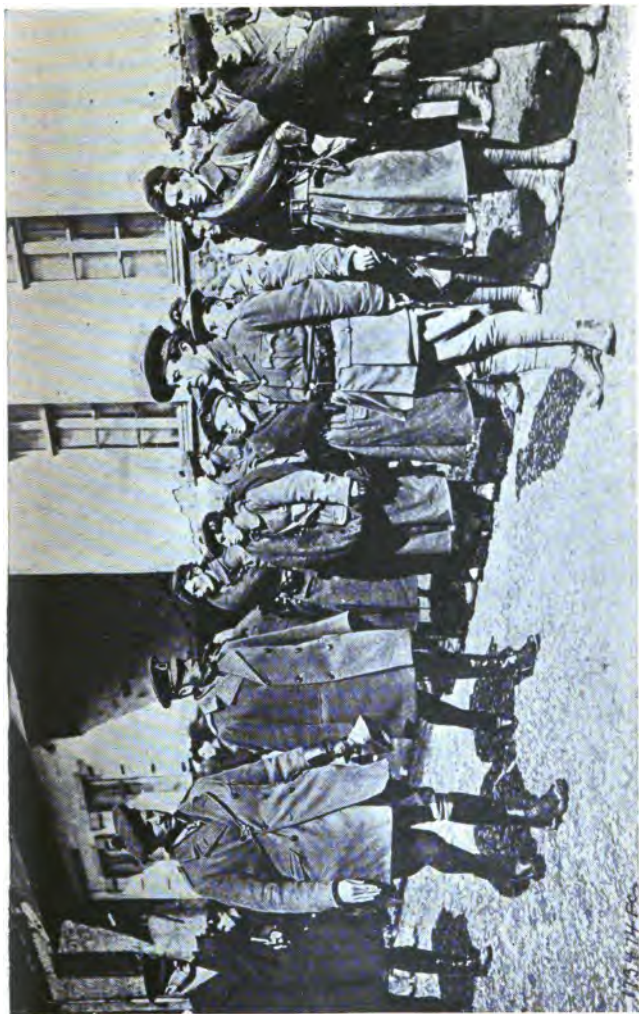
"I don't want to get out," said Jim. "I've got something coming to me and that's all right, but I want to square myself with you."



"Beat it," I said. "I don't want to 'crime' you. Get on out of here quick."

Well, he left but he went to every other man in that squad and apologized to each one individually. That's the thing that makes soldiers stick; that's what makes men pals for life; that's what makes men weep and swear and fight like mad men when a good pal gets his from Fritz.

Always during that long winter we were yearning more and more for France and the excitement we had anticipated when we joined up. The constant round of routine irked. We read of the big fights over there. We wanted to do our share in them. Rumor was always afloat. Every day, almost, came the report that within a week we would surely be on our way. We were hard as nails now and a fine-looking body of fighting men. From the mines, the stores, the offices and from the Highlands they had come to make up our battalion of a thousand men. Many of these were stoop-shouldered when they joined up, but back of them was the sturdy Scotch and English and Irish blood. The out-of-door life, the hard training and all, had straightened up every last man. Now we were one thousand square-shouldered, full-chested lads, tough and strong and ready for the hardest kind of work. We wanted to be over there. We knew we would be able to make the name of our battalion glorious.



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**King George Inspecting Scottish Troops**

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But the winter dragged along. Rumor after rumor collapsed into nothing but rumor. We were getting surly when one day it was announced the king was coming to inspect us again. That meant, could mean, only one thing: we were soon to go. But the king would find a different body of men now from what he had seen the first time he came. He would find us different physically, different mentally. He would find us anxious to see him, ready to stand at attention as long as he might desire, loyal to him, enthusiastic for him and ready to die for him.

He came in just the same prompt and democratic manner as before. He spoke to many of the men in ranks and then stood out in front of us and made us a speech.

"This is a war," he said, "in which civilization is fighting against the forces of barbarism. It is not a war of our seeking. It is a war that has been thrust upon the world by a people gone military mad. The Germans have invaded Belgium, a weak and peaceful neighbor. You have read of the unnamable atrocities which have been perpetrated there. You men are going out to fight the battles of the civilized world. You and all the forces of the empire have a tradition to uphold. I know you will live up to every tradition of the Anglo-Saxon race. I hope you will all come back, although I know some of you will not. Some of

you must give your lives in this cause, but in giving your greatest gift, remember you are giving it in the cause of the world and in the cause of future generations. Your country will reverence and honor you for it. Posterity will render you homage. Good-by and may God bless and keep you."

He saluted smartly and turned away. From a thousand throats burst a great cheer, a cheer in which the hearts of one thousand British soldiers were joined in love for the little man who occupies the English throne.

A few days later we were told we could no longer leave the billets. At last we were to go, at last we were to leave dear old Blighty and the wives and children and mothers and fathers and sweethearts and friends we had there. We were going into the great war, into the unknown, "somewhere in France."

## IV

### KISSED INTO FRANCE

I WAS lonesome. Why shouldn't I be?

We were confined to billets. We knew that at last we were going.

I, alone of the one thousand men constituting that battalion, had no wife, no child, no mother, no father, no sweetheart, no one who cared. I was utterly alone. More than three thousand miles, much of it Atlantic Ocean, separated me from anybody who cared whether I went or whether I came back. Indeed, even my family back in Holland, Michigan, didn't know I was going. I had written to them that I had enlisted but I had also told them of my appointment as instructor and had left the idea that I was to remain in Scotland to drill recruits. So I had not even a telepathic connection with my friends and relatives. I was just alone.

All my pals were daily, almost hourly, receiving parcels from their loved ones in the city. All sorts of things for their comfort and happiness came through, but not one parcel ever came in for me. I was an American in a strange land with only such casual friends as I had made during our period of training and most of these were my comrades in arms.

Lonesome? I never was so lonesome in my life. I was not only lonesome, but I felt an outcast. Perhaps just a little bitterness crept into my heart, too. I was going away to the battle-field. Perhaps I was going to an unknown grave. I was going to face all the dangers which that greatest of all wars produce. The chances were against my coming back.

American and a stranger though I might be, I was still going out to fight, perhaps to die, for England. I was going to do my bit just as courageously and just as loyally as if I had been born under the flag I was now to fight under. Was I not entitled to a little recognition in these hours when we were preparing to go into the unknown? Yet, as I turned my face toward France and the trenches, nobody came to wish me God-speed or a safe return.

It was in the evening of March 6, 1915, when we were finally turned out fully equipped and prepared to go. The trains were ready for us, the crowds were packed into the streets waiting for us. We were drawn up on the parade at Hamilton. The Duke of Hamilton, the Lord Mayor of Hamilton and other civil and military officials addressed us. Then we marched out on our way to the station, the first leg on our journey to the trenches.

At the head of our column were two big bands of pipes, and a bugle corps. The bugle corps consisted of

some forty boys of from fifteen to eighteen years of age, led by an old bugler-major, too old for active service. When the pipes would cease their skirl, the bugles would take it up until the air itself seemed to thrill with the blare.

The whole country-side had turned out to see us go. The great crowd surged into the streets and packed so densely that frequently we were off our feet and were being borne along by the mass. The skirl of the pipes, the blare of the bugles, the cheers of the crowd made the most thrilling scene I have ever known. From all sides civilians clapped us on the back as we struggled along. Cigarettes, bottles, parcels of all sorts were thrust into our hands and pockets. Every now and then a woman recognizing her husband, son or sweetheart would break through the ranks and throw her arms around her loved one. How we ever reached the station, I do not know. But at last we were there and the gates closed behind us. That gave us a little free way and a chance to breathe.

We stowed our packs into the carriages assigned us and then once more the gates were opened. Those having relatives in the battalion had previously been given tickets which admitted them within the gates, so for an hour they came to say their last farewells.

Women and children stood in a sad but admiring group around some big Scotchman, the husband and



father. But unlike our American farewells, there was little hugging or kissing. The women and children would pat the soldier gently, while the big tears would stream down their faces and they would try to talk calmly and hopefully. And the brawny Scot would place his hands on the shoulders of those loved ones and calmly and quietly say: "Never mind. It's all right. I'll be back soon."

Two hours I stood there sadly watching all this. Nobody noticed me. I wondered what I would have done had my own loved ones been there to say farewell to me. Sometimes I was glad they were not there for I doubted if I could have been as sturdily undemonstrative as these Scotchmen were.

At last came the whistle and the order to get on board. The pipes began to play once more as we clambered into the carriages. Big Billy Watt, who was not going with us, was blowing his best. *Auld Lang Syne* was the tune.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot."

Tears were shining in Billy's eyes.

"And never brought to mind."

The tears were now running down Billy's cheeks. Faster and faster they flowed. Billy took the pipes from his mouth and wept like a child.

Another big Scotchman next Billy was weeping too. Then he quit, and one after another the pipers in that

big band gave up until the music at last died away in a wail from a single lonely pipe.

I had been watching Billy and the words to his tune were running through my mind. My heart was heavy. All around me the last farewells were being said, but nobody was saying good-by to me. I was just about to step into the carriage when a fine-looking young Scotch girl came up to me. "Good-by," she said, and quicker than thought she planted a kiss on my mouth. Then with a smile she was gone.

I was not forgotten after all. I had never seen the girl before, but somewhere in that crowd she had seen me standing sadly alone when suddenly to her big Scotch heart had come the determination that no man should go away on that train without some one to wish him well. I swung on board that train with a lighter heart than I had had in hours. I was not forgotten in all the world. God bless that lassie, whoever she was!

I still had another well-wisher, too, but I didn't know it until just as the train was about to move. Sergeant-Major Dallard of our battalion was not going out with us. He was all soldier and he was left behind to train recruits. He came out with the second bunch, however, and was killed soon after going into the firing line. Dallard had never shown any particular interest in me nor had I counted him as any especial friend, but just before we pulled out of the station he came

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into the carriage calling: "Where's Pat McCoy?" When he had found me he shook hands most heartily and as the tears streamed down his cheeks he said: "I'm sorry yet happy to see you go, Pat." In my hand he left a pound note.

The train moved. We were on our way. Behind us were the hills and the heather so dear to most of the men in our battalion. Behind us were the loved ones, the wives and the children whom many a man would never see again. Before us were the trenches and the battle-fields of France, before us was the glorious death for flag and country, before us was the unknown. We were going forward eagerly, going to the strife where only four weeks later more than half our thousand splendid men gave up their lives.

It was interesting to see the different ways in which the different men were affected. Some were sitting quietly in their seats, dreaming of those left behind, imagining as far as possible what the future might hold in store. Some were partaking liberally from the bottles which had been slipped to them on the march to the station. From these they were gaining a false hilarity, courage, forgetfulness. Some were filled with excitement and buzzed about aimlessly, talking almost hysterically. Jim Fischer and I decided to take an account of our financial condition. We were going to

London and France, we might want to spend a little before another pay-day came around. We found that between us we had four pounds or the equivalent of twenty dollars in American money. This sum must last us until either the paymaster or Fritz got to us.

Nobody slept on board that train that night. Everybody was too excited. Then at every station the Red Cross handed us cigarettes, sandwiches and tea. Dawn was breaking when we rolled into Euston Station in London. Immediately we were turned out and lined up at the long troughs to wash. At every station they had constructed sinks, like our American horse troughs, so that an entire battalion of troops could wash up in a half-hour's time. As soon as we had completed our ablutions, we polished boots and buttons and fell in for inspection. At ten A. M. we started on our march across London to Victoria Station.

That was a wonderful march. Everywhere the streets were crowded. From one station to the other we passed between solid walls of humanity. The crowd showered us with flowers, cigarettes, fruits, everything imaginable, and always from the crowd came shouts of "Hello, Jock. Good luck, Jock."

We reached the big yard at Victoria Station and fell out for rest and for dinner. And here it was

announced that at two o'clock we would be inspected by the great Kitchener, so each of us looked himself over with care, touched up a dull button here and there, and made ourselves as near perfect as we could.

We were all anxious to see Kitchener, and wanted to look our very best for him. All Scotland was as proud of him as if he had been a Scotchman, and we wanted him to be proud of us, too.

At one P. M. we fell in and were given a most rigid inspection by the colonel. This was scarcely over when the pipes began playing the familiar *Loch Lomond*. We knew what that meant. Kitchener was here!

We were instantly on edge for his appearance. The pipes quit and the bugles took up the salute.

"Battalion, 'shun!" roared the colonel, and we snapped into position.

"Battalion, shoulder arms! Battalion, present arms," followed in quick succession.

A group of men approached—some fifteen or sixteen in all. At the head of them strode a tall, giant-shouldered but slim-waisted man. He was squarely erect and walked with an exact military stride. Great shaggy eyebrows gave him an especially stern appearance while his heavy mustache accentuated his iron jaw. He was powerful both in physical and mental appearance. His lips were hard set, and even as he

entered the square at some distance from us we all seemed to feel his eyes boring into our most secret hearts and minds.

It was Kitchener, the Kitchener whose eyes had challenged me ever since I first set foot on English soil. It was the Kitchener who by a look had caused Britons to spring to arms. It was the Kitchener of Khartoum, the Kitchener whom the British Empire worshipped and trusted, the Kitchener who as a soldier was the daddy of us all. He was polished from head to foot, and his heels were polished also.

Followed by his staff he walked smartly up to the colonel and returned the salute. Then he passed down the line and every man of us was given a look-over we never shall forget. As he passed along, Kitchener seemed to stoop forward slightly, to squint up his eyes and then bore holes through you. He had the most piercing eyes I ever saw. As he looked me over I could tell just where his gaze was resting even though my eyes were straight ahead. When Kitchener looked at my belt, I could feel it in my stomach and when he passed around behind us, I could tell when he was looking at the heels of my boots.

As Kitchener marched down the line he spoke to several of the men. I was wondering if perhaps he might not speak to me or was I always to be unlucky in the presence of the great? He passed me with a

searching look. I had lost again. No. He had stopped before the next man beyond me and was glancing back. I felt his eyes pass over me and I felt them stop when they reached my left breast. There was my little American flag. It had stopped the great Kitchener.

Now he would speak. But what would he say? It was against regulations that I should have any pin on my tunic. I had worn my little flag always and nobody had ever forbidden me. To-day, however, I was standing under the withering gaze of Kitchener who was all soldier and no sentiment. My uniform was not correct. I could feel Kitchener's eyes burn on that little flag, the flag of a nation not yet in the war. I had a vision of Pat McCoy standing out in front of the whole battalion to be reprimanded by Lord Kitchener. I was beginning to sweat and through my mind passed all sorts of answers to questions I expected him to ask. Should I tell him I was an American and proud of it, and proud of my flag, or should I humbly remove my colors and take whatever punishment might be inflicted?

Kitchener's mouth opened. I was sweating but I had set my jaw for the battle. It came at last.

"Do your boots fit?"

For an instant I could not speak. I was ready to reply to another question. I know my face must have



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softened almost to a grin as I recovered my senses and replied smartly:

"Sir, yes, sir."

Kitchener passed on. He made no remark about my excess decoration. Perhaps he even then saw into the future and knew that some day American flags would be as plentiful on the firing line as those of any other nation.

His inspection over, Earl Kitchener stood out in front of us and addressed us briefly. He was about as severe a looking man as ever I have seen. But he was not a half bad speaker. He was brief and pointed and he had something to say.

"You men look fit to represent Scotland," he said, fixing his eyes on the man directly in front of him. "You know the traditions of Scotland. I am sure you will live up to them. Do not forget that you also represent the British government. I am proud to inspect so fine a body of men."

He saluted smartly and at command we once more presented arms. Then Kitchener shook hands with each of the officers and turned to go.

"Stand at ease. Stand easy," came the commands from the colonel.

That gave us the opportunity we were waiting for. We cut loose a big cheer for Lord Kitchener. He turned around and his face softened just a little.

Again his hand went to his cap. Then he mounted, and followed by his staff, rode away.

Soon after this we entrained and a few hours later we were settled for the night in a rest camp at Southampton. At nine the following morning we marched through town once more and went on board a U-boat to take us across the Channel and into the fight. The U-boats didn't cut much figure then and they could take troops across the Channel in daylight without much danger of accident.

It was a rough passage and although it took us only about four hours to make it, the rails on all three decks were thickly lined with brawny Scotchmen proving that their skirts advertised women's stomachs, at least. You never will be able to guess how sick that bunch was. If the trenches were any worse than the Channel, every man in the battalion was willing to go back home and let Fritz conquer the earth if he wanted to.

The sight of Boulogne was the most welcome thing in the world. The quay was thickly covered with people all cheering us wildly. In those days France was glad to see any body of troops that might assist in preserving their country from the hands of the Hun.

As we disembarked the crowd went wild. Women rushed up to us, threw their arms around us and with tears streaming down their cheeks, kissed us. This was not bad at all. Several mighty attractive French

girls had kissed me and I was rather enjoying it. But all at once an old man came up and before I knew what he was up to, had kissed me on each cheek. Should I smash him? I thought I should. Then I noticed other Frenchmen were kissing my pals so I set it down as a custom of the country and allowed my ravisher to live.

As soon as we could disentangle ourselves, we marched away, across the town to rest billets. All through the streets we were pelted with flowers, cigarettes, things to eat, and even given bottles of wine. Pretty girls would rush out at us, throw their arms around us and kiss us. Oh, I've been in a lot worse places.

One little beauty made a leap at me as I was marching on the right flank of our fours. As she leaped I reached out my right arm, caught her in the crook of it, lifted her up and kissed her, passed her along to the next man on my left, who also kissed her and passed her on until, before she was fully aware what was happening, she had been kissed by four brawny Scotchmen and without her feet touching the ground had been passed from one side of the street to the other. And all the while the people were yelling at us and jabbering in a language not a word of which any of us could understand.

The following morning we were on parade before a

lot of French officers. One French general addressed us in a mixture of French and broken English. We couldn't understand a word of what he was saying but we were sure it was good because he waved his arms frantically while he was talking and all the women cried. So when he finished we gave him a cheer, for luck. Now I'll gamble good American money, the value of which I can undersand, that that cheer we gave that general was never before equaled in the history of the world. Some of the members of the battalion thought they had learned a little French, so the cheer was a mixture of: "Viva Frenchmen," "Vivvy la France," "Veeva Fransay," "Hooray," "Hurrah," "Here, Here," and from the Highlanders "Aye."

But it went for what was meant rather than what was said and the general was doubtless pleased. He certainly should have been. Then, too, the pipes saved us a bit by starting *The Marseillaise* while the French band replied with *God Save the King*.

Then we marched away again, this time to the base. There were in this camp perhaps fifty thousand men; later on, after I was wounded the first time, I was back there and found nearly a half million, ready to go forward when needed. But we were just the advance guard of Kitchener's army, one of the first contingents of his first million.

Once established in this great base camp, we started out to buy post-cards to send back home and to get acquainted with the town and the French people.

In a few hours we had become about the best pantomimists in the world. Fischer and I wanted cigars. We went into a shop and after a lot of acting made the shopkeeper understand what we were after.

"How much?" Fischer asked, getting ready to pay for the smokes.

The shopkeeper looked at us blankly. We tried various stunts and then Fischer pulled out some money and held it out to him. It was English money, however, but the shopkeeper got the idea.

"*Cinq sou*," he said.

We were stumped.

"Too bad. She was a fine girl," said Fischer. "Now what in hell does 'Sank Soo' mean?" he asked, turning to me.

"I'll pass," I responded. But the shopkeeper saw we were over our heads and tried to help us out. He held up his fingers and counted off five of them. Well we could get that all right so we gave him five English pennies. The shopkeeper knew English money and was honest in the bargain. He returned half of it to us and we learned that tuppence ha'penny is the equivalent of "Sank Soo," whoever she was.

A few days later we drifted into an estaminet

or saloon where a whole bunch of our Scotchmen were trying to get what they wanted from a Frenchman who couldn't understand a word of their lingo nor speak a word that they could understand.

"Twa beers," ordered a Scot.

"*Byayr?*" responded the Frenchman.

That sounded something like it so the Scotchman took a chance.

"Aye. Twa," he said.

"*Oui, oui,*" said the Frenchman, who seemed to have caught the Scot's idea.

But his reply stopped the Scot for a moment. Then a great light dawned on him.

"Aye. We, we," he said, pointing to his pal and to himself. Oh, we were learning French pretty fast in those days.

We soon found some little English-French dictionaries containing such simple words as were necessary to make one's needs known. They had been printed for this particular purpose and they made the situation all the funnier. With these little dictionaries in front of them, the boys would sit down in an estaminet and attempt to order a dinner. I've heard it sound like this:

"Gi' me some doo pain and bee ure, woofs and the."

What he was trying to ask for was bread and butter, eggs and tea, but given only a five minutes' course

in French and that from the little book he had just purchased, then add to it a big Scotch burr, and the result was beyond belief.

I soon discovered the way to avoid embarrassment was to hunt up in the little book what I wanted and then instead of trying to pronounce the words, just place my finger on them and say: "Bring me that."

The boys learned that "*bon jour*" is used about as our "how d'ye do" or "good morning" are, but when they became so proficient in French that they handed it out on every possible occasion, it soon became more like "bun soor." They used it day and night alike and as many a *damoiselle* and her Scotch soldier parted late in the evening the Scot stuck out his chest and said with great pride in his accomplishment: "Bun soor."

But we were not to enjoy life at this camp long. We had expected several months' drilling here before going into the trenches, but men were needed badly for the Huns were pressing hard. They had the men, the guns, the ammunition; we had little more than the determination. Instead of a month or more of training, therefore, seven days from the time we first set foot on French soil we were on the firing line. No contingent since the opening days of the war has been sent into battle so soon after landing.



## V.

### VETERANS

**"FLEMING."**

No answer came.

The sergeant looked up.

**"Fleming,"** he repeated and louder.

Private Kene clicked his heels together, straightened stiffly to attention and responded:

**"Dead."**

**"Forsythe,"** the sergeant called.

Another man snapped to attention.

**"Dead,"** he responded.

Five times more as the names of Harris, Kirkwood, MacTavish, Malcolm and Rafferty were called, a pal answered:

**"Dead."**

We had just returned from our first trick in the trenches. We were no longer rookies, we were veterans now. We had been on the firing line, had stood face to face with Fritz and had sustained our losses. Roll was now being called for the first time since we went in. According to the British army regulations, the company falls in at roll call without arms and stands at ease. This means that the men stand with

their feet well apart and their arms behind them. As your name is called, you bring your heels together, drop the arms smartly to the sides, stand rigidly at attention and respond: "Sergeant."

On this occasion as the names of seven of our company were called, it was a friend, the pal who slept with him, who answered for him: "Dead."

It was but two weeks before that we had left Scotland, had said good-by to friends and families, and yet thus quickly we had become veterans, veterans through the killing of some of our brave fellows.

We had been but a few days in the base camp when "iron rations" were issued to us. These consisted of a tin of bully beef, a can of tea and sugar and six hard biscuits. We were told these were emergency rations to be opened only on the order of an officer who alone would be qualified to determine the emergency.

At the same time we were told we would move up "a little closer to the firing line." That threw us all into excitement.

It was just breaking day, mixed snow and rain were falling and a nasty wind was cutting around our bare knees. Loaded with all our equipment we swung away from the base camp over the rough cobblestoned roads, slipping and sliding and sloshing in the mud and water, but forward—always forward "a little closer to the firing line."

All day until four in the afternoon we sloshed along. At that time we swung into Hazebrouck, which apparently had at one time been within the zone of fire. There among its ruins we were to camp for the night. We could hear the distant boom of the big guns and occasionally in the darkness see a star shell rise above the horizon, glow for a moment and then fade away.

All around us were evidences that we were near the battle front. Troops were forever marching past us. Some, mud smeared and weary, were marching back in the direction whence we had come, going to rest after having done their bit out in front.

"Oh, you rookies," they yelled at us. "You'll get yours a plenty. Wait till Fritz gets his eyes on those skirts, Jock. Lord love you but you'll get yours."

And we handed back gibe for gibe as best we could for we were one thousand men, strong, big and husky and rather proud of ourselves.

Here about us were guns, caissons, transports of all kinds, ambulances, everything; here we also saw some things more familiar: the busses and the lorries, that still bore the names of their London owners. From one as it rolled past us a leg protruded. From another a tiny red stream could be seen trickling. We were indeed "a little closer to the firing line."

At four o'clock on the following afternoon we were

once more on the march. Always we moved in the direction of the boom of the guns and the light of the star shells. Always we were getting "a little closer to the firing line."

The roar of the artillery grew louder, the troops more numerous, the jam of transports, of ambulances, of artillery, of caissons, of supply trains more dense. At two in the morning we were ordered to halt and to sleep in the open. Here the ground occasionally shook under the shock of bursting shells, and we could hear the rattle of the machine guns.

All the following day we watched the moving troops, some coming from the trenches and some preparing to go in. Here, just "a little closer to the firing line" was the entrance to the communicating trenches which lead to the firing step, to the place where, at last, we would be face to face with Fritz.

Late in the afternoon we were joined by a number of English Tommies of the Eighth Middlesex. At seven that evening our battalion with C Company in the lead was following these Tommies through the communicating trenches away toward the front.

The communicating trenches twisted and weaved around. We wiggled through them in single file. Under foot they were muddy and wet with only a few branches thrown on the bottom to make a little improvement in the footing. They were barely wide

enough to permit us to walk with even a reasonable degree of freedom. We had, of course, all our equipment on and our pouches on either side were bulging with ammunition.

Almost from the instant we entered these trenches we were under fire. Shells whizzed overhead and the ground shook with the concussion when they burst. At first we were always looking up, imagining we could see them as they passed over us. It annoyed us, too, when we soon noticed that all the shells seemed to be going in one direction. Rarely was there a British shell going back to answer the hundreds the Germans were sending our way. Of course we didn't have the shells in those early days of the war and the few we did have were carefully husbanded for the great emergency. After we had become a little more calloused, we used to laugh when a British shell went over and one of the boys would remark with surprise in his tone: "Hello, they've dug up another shell somewhere."

Our guides warned us to keep close together, for to become separated might easily mean to get lost. Always down the line cautions and orders were being passed: "Watch yer step." Meaning to look out for an obstruction. "Watch out overhead." Perhaps a wire of a tree branch lay across the trench.

All at once I ducked. I don't know why I did it

but I did. Scarcely had I done so when just ahead of me there came a tremendous roar and a shock that threw me against the side of the trench. It seemed, too, as if I had been struck in the face. My eyes batted and my ears ached.

The line stopped. I recovered my senses and rather guessed a shell must have exploded somewhat nearer than usual. The line moved forward again.

"Watch yer step," came back the warning.

I stumbled in the darkness and stopped to see what it was in front of me. It startled me when I recognized the kilts and uniform of our battalion. I stooped a little lower. There in the bottom of the trench lay Pete Forsythe. Pete's fighting days were over.

Always I had had a horror of the dead. Whenever I had attended a funeral, I had avoided looking on the body. Now right at my feet lay Pete Forsythe. Back there in Scotland were his wife and his two bairns. I knew them well. Many a time during our period of training in Hamilton I had gone to Pete's home for a meal. Pete would never go back there now.

"Go ahead," somebody growled from behind me.

"Come on. Keep together. Watch yer step," came the word from farther up.

Again I looked in front of me. There lay another body. It was that of Geordie Malcolm. More lay near. Fleming, Rafferty, Harris and MacTavish, six

of them, six of our company lay there where a single shell had caught them on their way to the front-line trenches.

I moved forward again but I was silent and depressed. All the hero stuff was gone out of me. I couldn't drive from my mind the mental picture of those six fine big fellows who only seven days ago I had seen so proudly kissing their loved ones farewell on the station platform at Hamilton. Now they lay dead in the bottom of a communicating trench. They had never reached the firing line. Never once had they sighted their rifles in the direction of Fritz.

I was still thinking hard when a voice in front of me caused me to start. It was an officer who was directing the men as they came up to their proper places. I turned according to my instructions. I was in the first-line trench at last, days, even weeks, before I had even dreamed I would be.

Somebody in our outfit struck a match to light a cigarette.

"Put out that light," bawled an officer.

"Put-put-put-put," ripped overhead.

It was Fritz's answer to the invitation. He let fly with a machine gun, hoping an English head might be sticking up above the parapet near that light. And Fritz was only about fifty yards away at this particular point.

We were promptly paired with Middlesex men. Part of our company was immediately sent to the dug-outs to sleep. The rest were sent to the firing step for guard duty. Fischer and I happened to be assigned to guard duty first and with our Middlesex teachers were sent to the same firing bay.

While on guard duty the men are always paired. One stands on the firing step with his eyes always turned toward Fritz, always on the alert and always ready to fire. The second man remains below usually sitting on the firing step. He is to take the place of his partner if hit, he is to give the alarm to the sleeping men if Fritz starts anything and he is to pass along the orders or messages that may be sent through the trenches.

My Middlesex man was waiting for me to mount the firing step, for Fischer and I had agreed I should do my trick of a half-hour first. I looked up at the parapet above me and realized that as soon as I stepped up, my head was going to be exposed to the rifle fire of Fritz. What would I see when I stepped up? I was wondering. All sorts of ideas came into my mind. Perhaps I was soon to join Forsythe and those other lads who had fallen back there in the communicating trench.

It was a real mental effort to force myself up on that firing step, but I did it. My head came above the



parapet. Before me I saw—darkness! But I knew that somewhere out in front Fritz was waiting for a chance to shoot. My Middlesex partner stepped up in a perfectly businesslike way. It meant nothing at all to him.

At first I had an almost irresistible desire to duck. Then it seemed to me I could see persons moving out there in front. I wanted to fire. I glanced at my Middlesex partner. He was leaning up against the parapet keenly alert, his eyes fixed always out there across No Man's Land, but he was motionless. No appearance of excitement about him. It was just business.

A star shell went up. It was such a star shell as I had never seen before. It lighted the entire area as brilliantly as a search-light. Our little weaklings were merely tallow candles beside them.

I ducked.

"Whatcha duckin' for?" asked my partner.

I looked at him. He was standing motionless as a statue, looking keenly over toward Fritz.

"r-r-r-r-r-R-R-R-R-R-R-r-r-r-r!"

Again I ducked. It was the rattle of a machine gun that Fritz had turned loose at what he thought were heads made visible by the star shell.

Again my partner scoffed at me as he stood there motionless. Then he entered into a somewhat lengthy

and altogether interesting dissertation on the behavior of a soldier and why. His instructions stood me in good stead later.

First, when a star shell goes up, no matter where you are, "freeze" like a hunting dog. The blinding rays of the star shell coming suddenly out of the darkness make it impossible to see anything that is motionless. Don't drop. Don't run. Don't move. Don't even breathe. Freeze and you can't be seen.

Second, the crack of machine-gun fire is loudest when just overhead. If you wait until it is loudest before ducking, you either duck needlessly because danger has passed or you are dead before you duck—if the ball was meant for you.

Third, there's no use ducking or dodging anyway. When your "ticket is up" you'll get it anyway, no matter what you do. Until that time comes you will be safe anywhere.

After this I stood still and began to accustom myself to conditions. One thing bothered me. That was Fischer sitting down there behind me in almost perfect safety.

"You remind me of that old joke about the vice-president of the United States," I said to him at length. "You just sit there on my step waiting for me to get plugged so you can get my job."

Fischer snorted for he had lived in the States

almost as much as in England. Our two Middlesex men, however, didn't get a bit of it and never batted an eye.

Our half-hour was about over and I hadn't yet fired my rifle. Two or three times when star shells were sent up I had been certain I had seen men out in front. Anxious to appear on the alert, I had spoken of this to my Middlesex partner, but his only remark was:

"Yer eyes are playin' yer tricks. A bloke's always seein' things till he gits used to it."

But I was determined to fire my rifle anyway, so just before Fischer relieved me, I said a little prayer, pointed by rifle in the general direction of the German trenches and pulled the trigger.

The result was all unexpected. I was promptly given a hard shove by my Middlesex partner who moved quickly several feet from our last position. The reason was immediately apparent. A ball came cracking back over us. I then learned the German snipers were quite likely to fire back at the flash of one of our rifles. Therefore it was the correct thing to move at once after firing in the dark.

At length we were relieved. The time had come when we were to seek a dugout and sleep. Fischer and I went to the one assigned us. We had great curiosity as to what it would be like. Of course we



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had built some back in Scotland but we had already found out that a great many things we did back there were not at all in vogue here in France.

The dugouts in this particular sector were unusually deep and the one to which we happened to be assigned was one of the deepest. Ten steps were necessary to descend from the level of the trench to the level of the dugout floor. Except for our kits we were not permitted to remove any of our equipment at any time we were in the front-line trenches. With our equipment, entrenching tools, water-bottle, etc., on our backs, our pouches bulging with ammunition on each side, a rifle in one hand and our kit in the other we reached the entrance to the dugout. I was ahead. I squeezed myself through the low and narrow doorway and stepped upon the top step. I started to descend. The steps were slippery and slimy with mud and water. In an instant I was at the bottom of the dugout. My feet had shot from under me. Expeditiously, if not gracefully, I had made my entrance.

Before I could assemble myself Fischer arrived in much the same manner. We disengaged ourselves and then began to look about at the palatial apartments in which we were expected to sleep.

A candle end was burning. By its flickering and uncertain light we discovered ten men already sleeping in the little room. We looked for our feather bed but

could find nothing resembling one. We could scarcely find room to lie down anyway. At length we made it, but lying down was a long way from sleeping.

I tried to find a comfortable position. Forbidden to remove what I had on me, this seemed impossible. I couldn't lie upon my back, my entrenching tool and the water-bottle on my hips prevented. I couldn't lie on my side, for either way I turned those pouches of ammunition got in the way. Later on I learned how to unbuckle my belt and throw back the pouches to permit me to lie upon my side, still without removing any of the equipment.

Uncomfortable as I was this night, I managed to doze a little. But it seemed I had scarcely lost consciousness when we were all turned out. It was a little before daybreak, when it was customary fully to man the front-line trenches for that was the hour when Fritz was most likely to start something. This morning, however, was uneventful except for the usual morning hate as we called the shower of bullets and shells with which both sides opened and closed the day.

"Keep yer knobs down," was the warning which over and over was dinned into us this morning, for in the daytime, to stick your head above the parapet meant to draw the fire of a German sniper, so observation of Fritz was confined to the periscopes.

At this time, the trench periscopes consisted of

a small mirror stuck on a stick. This was raised at the rear of the trench and from the front we caught the reflections of what was doing out in No Man's Land. I couldn't keep away from the periscope. Indeed it was almost a fight among our own men to stand in front of one. It was our first view of over there in the direction of Berlin. During our night guard duty we had been unable to see anything.

Jock Kirkwood of our company was not satisfied with looking Fritz over through a mirror.

"Hell," he said, "I'm going to have a *good* look."

Over there concealed carefully and protected were German snipers waiting for some rookie to take just such a look, but Jock couldn't resist. He was near me as I sat on the firing step looking into a periscope. When nobody was watching he cautiously stepped up on the step and raised his head above the parapet.

"Chuck!"

I heard a slight sound and turned just in time to see Jock's body crumple up on the step beside me and roll into the bottom of the trench. Poor Jock had taken a chance. He had seen nothing, but a sniper had seen him. A ball had caught him squarely in the mouth, and he was dead when he hit the bottom of the trench.

We all stood around him in wonderment. He was the seventh of our company to click in since we entered the communicating trench yesterday afternoon.



Six of them we had hardly been able to make out in the darkness and hurry of the night before, but now it was broad daylight and here at our feet lay Jock dead. Stretcher-bearers came and took his body away. His death had been a lesson to us. Now we were content to watch Fritz through those measly little mirrors.

Next day as our company moved back to the support trenches and another company came in to relieve us in the front line, I was ordered to the rear. When I had gone out with a number more detailed like myself, I found it was to act as escort at the funeral of the first seven of C Company to give their lives for their country and humanity.

A British cemetery had already been established back of the lines. We took over a section of it. Wrapped in their blankets and with their uniforms still on, these seven men were laid to rest. No bugle sounded over them. No salute was fired. We were too near the lines, and besides, ammunition was precious in those days.

And so it was that but a few days later when the battalion had come out of the trenches, when the roll was called seven men in C Company responded only through the mouths and hearts of their friends, and their response as they brought their heels together was:

"Dead."

## VI

### REST

"SHOW me a regiment with a reputation like the Gordons'."

"Damned few want one like it."

Wham!

The battle was on. Kilties rushed from all directions. Every man swung a pair of big fists at every head in sight. Tables were overturned. Chairs went into the air. Glassware was broken. Blood spurted from squashed noses. Eyes suddenly closed and big shed roofs appeared above them.

From the mob came the cries of the Gordon Highlanders, the yells of the Argylls, the curses of the Cameronians, the latter being our outfit. In an instant the estaminet was wrecked. Then as suddenly as it had begun, the battle ceased. Military police entered as the fighters of a moment before very tamely filed out.

We were in rest billets at Fleurbaix following our first trick in the front-line trenches. For six days—we thought—we would have nothing to do but rest and make merry. We had received our first pay

amounting to ten francs for the single men and five francs for the married ones. John Bull takes out half the pay of his married men and sends it direct to their dependents. With money in our pockets, therefore, we were on twenty-four hour leave to spend it.

Of course we had crowded into the estaminet. There were assembled soldiers from all the British forces but chiefly, at this point, from the Scottish units. Whenever the Scotch regiments get together, each always begins to sing the praises of his particular outfit. So it was this evening. While the men were sitting about the tables in the estaminet mixing the light French wines with the light French beers in an endeavor to impart some "kick" to the mixture, the men of the Gordons, the men of the Argylls and our own Cameronians began to tell just how good each regiment was. The implied insult to the Gordon Highlander who was singing the praises of his justly famous regiment brought forth instant refutation via the fist, and the fight was on.

Next morning, sore and stiff and with many a brave Scot wearing decorations not awarded for gallantry in action against Fritz, we stood at attention and listened to the order that every man in the battalion was fined tuppence to make good the damage to the estaminet. As each of the other outfits which took

part in that memorable engagement was similarly treated, the Frenchman who ran the place spent a part of each day praying that the evening might see another battle such as that of the night before.

But we had had our fun during that twenty-four hours' spending period. We had enjoyed a thorough relaxation and had forgotten all about war and the hardships and dangers out there in front. The likelihood that when next pay-day came around many of us would have already passed to eternal rest billets we never considered. We were interested now in enjoying our respite from the work in the trenches. Why worry about the morrow?

Another day had dawned, another day of rest. Nothing to do but see France and the people of the vicinity. Nothing to do but sing and play and fight among ourselves. Oh, this was the life! It was worth taking a chance with Fritz.

But somehow, having formed the battalion and having read the order for fines, the order to dismiss failed to come. We were inspected. Well, what of that? That would soon be over. Then we would be turned loose again. Inspection was over. Were we dismissed? Not much. We got a couple of hours of hard drill instead.

"Thought this was a rest camp," growled Fischer during a moment of relaxation.

"Maybe it is your English idea of rest," I responded, for I could always get a rise out of Jim by a gentle gibe at the English.

Noon came and with it dinner. Surely we would be turned loose in the afternoon. We were not, however. Instead we got another hard drill and a good long route march. Rest was not on the card for that day.

But perhaps the work of this day was merely in punishment for the disturbance of the night previous. To-morrow we would be turned loose.

To-morrow came and before night fell I had established title to being the third fastest sprinter on the western front, and I hereby challenge the nations of the earth to produce a man who can defeat the two men who defeated me.

The race which settled the question of superiority was an impromptu affair but none the less exciting. As soon as the morning duties were over, we marched away from the rest billets once more in the direction of the trenches. What was the big idea now? Everybody wanted to know and nobody was able to find out. Mile after mile we marched always back toward the trenches from whence we had but recently come for a six-day rest. Only two days had passed and we were returning. What did it mean?

We found out soon enough, when we reached a

great dump where were stacked up mountains of reeled barbed wire, pyramids of ammunition, great masses of clothing, supplies, food, everything that the soldier needed either for sustenance or for actual fighting. We were soon loaded up with all we could carry: some of us with bales of supplies; I had a reel of barbed wire; some had one thing and some another. Then with our burdens we started off once more toward the trenches. To make our rest worth while we had been detailed a work party for the day.

Into the communicating trench we passed carrying our loads. I heard the whirl of an airplane propeller. We had long since been instructed never to look up at an airplane since our white faces would then become visible to the aviator and give him some idea of our numbers. Besides we had become accustomed to seeing and hearing Fritz's planes hover over us whenever he felt like it, for at that time the Germans had absolute mastery of the air.

The whirl grew louder and the shadow of the plane fell over us. He must be flying mighty low. I looked. Sure enough, he was so low it seemed his propeller might strike the ground. He passed over us, shot into the air, whirled around and came back upon us, flying close down to that trench and lengthwise of it. As he approached, his machine gun began spitting at us. The race was on right then!

I haven't the slightest idea how I got out of that seven-foot trench but I did it. The first thing I fully realized was that I was above ground putting every pound I had into a mad dash for a shell-hole. The rest of our company was doing likewise. Each man had dropped his burden, got out of that trench and started to race for other cover. Jammed in the trench we offered a fair target for that machine gun. Out above ground scattered and running, Fritz might laugh at us but he had a poor chance of getting us.

I figured as I ran that I was setting a world's record. Imagine my surprise and chagrin when I jumped into that shell-hole and found two men who had beaten me to it. Just how panic-stricken I was you may guess when I tell you that I tried my best to dig in under those two kilties. I've often wondered how they beat me in that race, but I'll bet if the truth were known they beat the pistol.

That German got seven of our men in that trench before we could scatter. But once he had driven us out, he flew away and we went back to our work. By the loss of those men we were forced to make two trips to the front line with our goods, for we had to deliver the burdens of the dead men as well as our own.

It was night when we got back to the billets again

after a long, long hike. We had now had three days of our rest period. The first day had been occupied in spending our pay, the second in drills and a route march and the third in carrying wire and supplies to the front line, dodging a German aviator and losing seven men, as many as we had lost in our first six days in the front-line trenches. The British army idea of rest was certainly a great and wonderful thing.

But all next forenoon we did little but sleep and clean up. As the officers didn't seem very energetic, we rather figured we were really to rest.

"Fall in" came with the afternoon, and with full equipment we once more swung out of the camp and in the direction of the trenches. Surely there was no rest for the Scot.

Where we were bound, we didn't know. We were taking the general direction of the firing line, and as we marched along we speculated on what was to be our new stunt. Perhaps the Germans had broken through and the Cameronian Scottish Rifles had been called to save the British army. Maybe we were just going over to Berlin to eat a few cans of bully beef under the lindens. All sorts of fool suggestions were offered as it became more and more apparent that we were bound once more for the trenches.

At length we reached them and in the familiar



single file started through the communicating trenches. As we entered I observed one of the Royal Engineers join our party. It was rapidly growing dark and we were ordered to keep close together. I followed immediately behind the guide and the officer in command. Through the communicating trench we passed until at last we were in the front line. For a long distance we followed our guide blindly. At length we halted and were told to lay aside our equipment and leave it where we could pick it up and get into it quickly. That done our guide walked a few steps farther and then suddenly disappeared.

"Come on and watch yer step."

The voice seemed to come from the bowels of the earth. It startled me a bit. I looked and in the darkness of the trench I saw an even blacker hole in the front wall. It was like the entrance to a dugout. I stooped and entered. Down a considerable flight of steps I slipped and slid. At the bottom I found our guide crouched over and with a miner's lamp in his hand.

"Follow me," he said, and bent over nearly double he started rapidly along what appeared to be a tunnel.

I could just see the outline of his form by the light of his lamp. The tunnel was about three feet high and no more than that in width, which made it necessary to walk with the back at right angles to the legs.

Our guide was trotting along like a rabbit. I was following as best I could with Fischer and the rest of the company following behind.

We hadn't gone far when my back ached as it never had ached before. My cramped position, too, made it difficult to breathe. I was puffing hard.

"What's the great hurry?" somebody behind me called.

"Come on. We haven't got all night here," called back the guide.

I kept on as best I could. Behind me I could hear Fischer panting and swearing and back of him a continuous stream of cussing.

At last I could stand it no longer. I conceived the idea of dropping to my knees and creeping after that rabbit ahead, who wore the uniform of the Royal Engineers. I went down upon my knees and tried to keep the pace. It proved impossible. I was falling behind. Fischer stumbled over my heels and fell flat on top of me. Then came the great idea.

"Don't move," I said to him. "Stay right where you are."

"Come on, you blokes," called the engineer ahead of us.

"Go to blazes!" I called back. "I'm going to remain right here till I get my wind."

And we did. Fischer and I effectually blocked the

tunnel and all the other men back of us were glad enough to squat down, lie down or sit down for a rest.

By this time, of course, we had a pretty fair idea that we were in a mine tunnel. The thought brought anything but comfort to me. How far below the ground we were I had no idea. Where we were with relation to Fritz's trenches, I didn't know. We might be under his front line or under Berlin for all I knew. Perhaps we might come up in Willie's bedchamber. 'All I really knew was that we were underground to an uncertain depth and in an uncertain locality, that the air was close and foul, that it was dark except for the uncertain light of the miner's lamp and that our backs were nearly broken.

"Suppose while we are down here," I thought, "Fritz should take it into his head to make a raid. He would catch us like mice in a trap and without even a chance to fight back. Suppose a shell should happen to hit the trench in such a manner as to destroy the entrance to our tunnel. We'd have a few minutes only in which to think things over before our lights would go out from suffocation. It's a fine place to be in when so many things can happen. I'll confess I'd rather take my chances against that boche in his airplane. I could run then at any rate."

We were up and moving again. At length I made

out a little light ahead. A few paces more and we came to the place where the miners were at work. One man was down on his knees picking away at the earth while others shoveled the dirt into sacks. The sacks were passed back to us, and crouched down in that narrow space we passed them from one to another until they reached the mouth of the tunnel where they were taken by other men above ground, carried back of the front-line trench and emptied, the sacks being sent back into the tunnel again.

The sacks were small and individually not heavy, but by the time I had passed them back for half an hour, sweat was coming from every pore, I breathed in gasps and my back ached worse than ever. Nobody seemed inclined to tell us to rest so we just took one on our own responsibility. As there was no objection we kicked ourselves for not having taken one before.

We were now all sitting in the bottom of the tunnel, getting our wind and talking along the line. For just an instant a dead silence fell.

"Tap. Tap. Chug. Chug."

We all heard it. Every man looked at his neighbor. I could feel a cold sweat break out all over me. Funny little creeps ran up and down my spine. What was it? Everybody listened except the miners, who seemed to be paying no attention to that little sound which came so plainly from the earth.

"What's that noise?" I asked the engineer just ahead of me.

"Fritz," he responded laconically.

"Fritz," I repeated, and I know my voice shook a little. "What's he doing to make that noise?"

"Diggin' a mine," was the reply, and the miners stopped work so we could plainly hear again the thud of Fritz's pick somewhere down in the bowels of the earth.

Every man was listening intently. Those up in front were passing back to those behind the conversation which was taking place between the engineer and me.

"Whereabouts is he diggin'?" I asked.

"Pretty handy by the sound," said the engineer.

Where was he? Was he digging below us and perhaps getting ready to blow us up? Was he above us, and would he come through on top of us? Was he digging so he would suddenly burst in and toss a bomb among us? Where was he? The uncertainty was getting on my nerves.

"Can't he hear us digging?" I asked.

"Sure," was the reply.

"Fine little rat-hole," I said with some scorn. "Whichever gets his mine dug last goes up first."

"Oh, it's all safe enough as long as we can hear him," said the engineer. "When we can no longer



**Kiltie McCoy, Trench Fighter and Bomber**

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hear him digging, then we begin to look out for he is about ready to touch off his mine. We like to hear him. We know we are safe then."

However, I didn't feel overly comfortable. I didn't have enough faith in Fritz that he wouldn't be perfectly willing to sacrifice his own men for the sake of getting us.

But at last that night of labor ended. Tired and dirty we crawled back out of that tunnel and started on our long hike to the rest billets. That rest stuff was by now a byword among us. During the time we had been in rest billets we had been harder at work except for the first day than when we were in the trenches. But the end of our rest was near. A few days more and we would be back on the firing step. We were thankful for that; we should be able to stand up straight at least. We would have the satisfaction of being killed while looking Fritz straight in the eye. We would not be mere rats in a trap without a chance even to struggle for life.

Vacation was almost over. We would go back to the firing step to recover from our rest. Actually we were going back to a slaughter pen, but that we didn't know.



## VII

### THE CRATER'S LIP

"I'd like to know whether I can shoot straight with this old blunderbuss."

"Me, too, but up to date as near as I can figure out we have qualified only as first-class common laborers who can dig sewers, carry reels of barbed wire and bales of other supplies and crawl through any hole big enough to let a rat in."

I had asked the question of Fischer one morning about two o'clock as we were standing our trick at guard duty in the reserve trench, our second time back to the firing line. It was a different sort of duty from that in the front-line trench. Here we did not watch over the parapet. Instead we stood in pairs at the intersections of the communicating trenches with the reserve trenches. We challenged everybody who passed along and especially kept a sharp lookout for gas, listening keenly always for that most dreaded of all sounds, the "tong, tong" of the gas gong. These gas gongs consisted of the brass shell casing of an eighteen pounder. They were hung at each of these intersections and near by always lay a chunk of iron. At the

first suspicion of gas, it was the duty of the discoverer to sound the alarm, and soon that "tong, tong" would be ringing for many miles up and down the trenches and far back of the lines.

"Perhaps we'll get action our next time up," I said as I lighted a cigarette, for we were permitted to smoke in the reserve trenches. "I'd really like to try, my luck on a live target instead——"

A tremendous roar drove from my mind whatever else I might have said. The ground rocked as if by an earthquake. I was thrown against the side of the trench. Instinctively I looked toward the front-line trenches. The sky was red in that direction. Around us dirt, stones and debris of all kinds were falling.

It was not necessary for us to give the alarm. From the dugouts the men came, buckling their belts as they ran. Everybody knew what had happened. Fritz had blown a mine in our front-line trenches. If permitted to occupy and hold the crater he would constitute a serious menace to our whole line in that sector.

We knew we were to get action at last. Now we should look death squarely in the face for we would make use of our bayonets for the first time. Now we should look death squarely in the face, for we would meet Fritz toe to toe, hand to hand, the better man to live, the weaker to die.

I trembled with excitement. The order came immediately to go over. We all tried to show how little we were frightened and how solid our nerves were.

"Here goes nothing," I said to Fischer, as we climbed up out of the trench and began picking our way through our own wire. As I think of it now I am sure we were all a little hysterical in our excitement, for a lot of meaningless banter ran up and down the line.

In front of our entanglements we deployed and then raced toward our front-line trenches where we knew Fritz was already established in the mine crater prepared for our reception.

Star shells began going up. Fritz's rifles cracked. I saw one of our men pitch forward and fall. Numbly I realized what had happened to him but it didn't seem to occur to me that I might be the next.

"Put-put-put-put-put-put."

Fritz had set up a machine gun and already it had begun to purr.

"Lie down," came the order, and we flopped to the ground and began crawling toward Fritz and the crater.

"I'm hit."

A big fellow named Jolley crawling along at my right spoke. I heard a slight gurgle. Turning my

head, I saw Jolley lying quite still with the blood flowing from a wound in his neck.

"Jolley's got his," I called to Fischer, who was crawling along close on my left.

"We'll all get ours in another minute," was his comforting reply.

"Not unless it's our turn," I responded, for I was pretty well filled with that fatalistic stuff which every soldier gets sooner or later.

We were firing away at the crater but our chances of hitting anything were vastly inferior to our chances of being hit. We were up in the open. The east was already showing signs of dawn. All at once something came bouncing in among us and exploded with a bang. Half a dozen men near by thrashed about a little and lay still. It was our introduction to the hand grenade, something we did not at that time have.

"Fall back."

The order came as a most welcome one. We were losing heavily and without a chance to get an even break in the fighting.

We were crawling back as fast as we could. I was making just as good time as any man in the outfit. Suddenly I found myself crawling across the body of a man. I stopped horrified. Then I looked at the face. Young Stewart lay there in the breaking

dawn just as peacefully as if he had fallen asleep. He was but a lad, nineteen years of age. He left college to join up with us. No finer boy ever lived than he. He was a quiet, refined, pink-cheeked lad who said little and was always kind and courteous to everybody. He never mixed in any of the rough stuff some of the rest of us got into. He never stole from his mates and consequently nobody ever stole from him. His record sheet was as clean as the day he enlisted. Every man of us loved him and as I saw him lying there in the half light, I felt like stopping to cry, even as the bullets and the shells flew about me. Stewart had been shot through the chest, and as he lay there was not a sign of pain or fear on his face. He looked as pink-cheeked and as smiling as he always did in life.

At length we were back in the reserve trench; that is, all but seventy of us were, for in that ten minutes out there before the crater that many of our men had fallen. We were back again cursing and swearing and anxious to get at Fritz. Then down the line the word was passed: "Stewart has clicked it." Instantly all was silence. For a moment we forgot our individual grievances against Fritz, to mourn for that pink-cheeked boy, and as we stood there, grim and dirty, with our fighting blood still boiling, I am sure every

man registered a vow that Fritz must pay dearly for the loss of young Stewart.

All day we were busy getting ready to wreak our revenge. Every meat tin we could find was filled with powder, nails, bits of barbed wire, fragments of old shells, anything and everything that was hard. The lid was wired tight shut except for a small hole through which we thrust a fuse made of powder wrapped in paper. When night came and we returned to the attack we would have bombs, too. Of course it was hard to say whether our home-made bombs were more dangerous to ourselves than to Fritz, but, on the other hand, we couldn't say a whole lot for Fritz's product. Fully half of these were duds.

It was early in the evening when again we got the word to go over. Carefully and silently we eased our way through the wire and crawled slowly toward the crater. We knew Fritz had been working feverishly all day to dig himself in. He knew we would be coming back after him to-night, and was making the most of his time to prepare a reception for us at the lip of the crater.

But Fritz didn't expect us quite so soon. He thought we would at least have the decency to wait until midnight before disturbing him. He was therefore mightily surprised when we began to sling our

home-made bombs at him and followed them up with a rush.

At last we were to have a chance to use our steel. I had been most curious about our bayonet drill and wondered if what we had learned back there in Scotland would be as useless as most of the other things we had learned. Something like these thoughts passed through my mind as with a yell I sprang up and along with Fischer raced forward to meet Fritz.

Immediately in front of me there loomed up what I thought then and what I still insist was the biggest Prussian the kaiser's realm ever produced. With a yell I charged him. Instinctively I realized that if I lunged with my bayonet point at the height it was held when running, I would get my man somewhere near the throat. As I neared him, he, for some reason, turned his head and spoke to somebody on his left. At the same time I lowered the point of my bayonet. It caught him in the exact spot we had been taught to get them—just above the belt and just below the breast bone. The point of my bayonet passed through his clothing, met with some resistance as it struck his abdominal wall, then it let through quickly and easily.

The German dropped his rifle and fell to the ground squealing and kicking and thrashing around. A sudden sickness seized me. I had killed a human being!

Then I realized what I was there for; had I not killed him he most certainly would have killed me and without the slightest compunction. But even as I realized all this, the knowledge that I had actually taken human life nauseated me even in the excitement of that moment.

I felt terribly sick at my stomach; felt certain I was going to vomit. Had it been light I am sure my comrades would have seen me pale. I was weak; my knees trembled. I couldn't take my eyes from the body of that German lying there before me. All the fight was out of me. For just a brief instant I stood still, an easy victim for any Hun who might have been near me. I looked toward Fischer just in time to see him drive his bayonet into a German and pull the trigger at the same time. I saw big McGill stick two and later found that in the few minutes' battle on the crater's lip he actually stuck four.

I even took account of how I had handled myself. As I did so, I realized I had done everything in the exact manner I had been taught and had myself taught others. I had driven my bayonet home at the proper spot. I had yelled at the German as I thrust. I had shown hate. I had withdrawn exactly as taught. Everything had been automatic with me. I had had the bayonet drill so thoroughly ground into my system



that I did all these things in that exciting moment without ever thinking of one of them.

Dazed and sick I stood, it seemed an hour yet it probably was but a few seconds. The fight was short and sharp. It was all but over now. I heard a shout.

"Look out there!"

I turned to the left. There I saw a party of Germans running up through a shallow trench they had dug. They would catch us on the flank. My fighting blood came back. I ran at them. I was on the level ground; they were below me slightly in the trench. As I reached the foremost man I thrust at his throat. He hadn't a chance. The bayonet showed at the back of his neck, his hot blood spurted all over my hands. Again I stopped; again I was sick and for an instant felt as if I was going to faint, but the fight was over now, the rest of the Germans, the few who remained alive, turned and fled. We had won the crater.

In the weird light of the star shells and bursting shells and spitting flashes of machine guns we had fought our first battle. I had had a chance to test my mettle. Twice I had won in man to man mortal combat. Fischer still lived, too. Now we all scrambled around that crater as fast as we could in order to dig in on the side facing Fritz.

In the bottom lay dozens of bodies, most of them Germans but a few of them ours. We examined them

all carefully, to make certain all were dead. We removed the identification disks from the bodies of our own men and there in the bottom of that crater for which both had fought valiantly, we buried friend and foe together. As we dug ourselves in we threw the dirt over the bodies and thus they helped even in their death to prepare a defense against the counter-attacks certain to come. They did come, too, but we held that crater and finally established ourselves in it, restoring our former line.

But our work was not yet done. We had a little surprise party ready for Fritz, too. We had a mine near this point which we were ready to touch off. Five days later we were sent to the spot. Night came and we crept silently out into No Man's Land. There we lay flat upon our faces waiting the moment when somebody behind should touch the button that would send Fritz nearer heaven than he'll ever get otherwise.

At length there was a terrible roar. The earth rocked with the force of the explosion. The air was filled with dirt, debris, rifles, bodies and parts of bodies. Scarcely waiting for all this mass to come down, we rose and rushed for the crater. Through meshes of broken and tangled wire we made our way only to be met by a terrific fire from rifle, machine gun and bomb.

We scrambled into the crater, fought as hard as

we could, attempted to dig ourselves in. Then from all sides centering upon this spot came a hail of rifle bullet and shell. No human force could stand it. Fritz with his tremendous preponderance of artillery and everything else to fight with centered all upon this crater.

Our men were falling like flies. The order came quickly. "Fall back." Back through the tangled wires we made our uncertain way. Men kept dropping on all sides. We raced across No Man's Land while the enemy barrage pursued us. We reached our own entanglements. Now a lane through the entanglement is cut zigzag with trip-wires at each opening. For one or two men it is not difficult to find the way and pass through quickly. But when you have a couple hundred men who have just been through hell, who have expected and are still expecting death any second, a couple hundred men whose sole desire is to get into the shelter of a trench in the quickest possible time, the way through the wires is difficult.

Some of our men lost their heads entirely. Without seeking the lanes, they madly imagined they could force their way through the entanglements. They leaped into them and many a good man died there. Remember that the barbs on these wires are not the little barbs you see on the fence around the farm. The spikes on these wires are long and as sharp as steel

can be made. The bodies of many of these men remained there on those barbs for weeks, for it is not at all easy to remove one once it has become firmly entangled.

I saw a lot of the men lose their way in the lanes and wander into the barbs. Comrades helped them out whenever possible. I saw little Meekin, one of the smallest men in the outfit, stuck in the wire. He had lost his way and now he was caught. He knew that death stared him in the face. Around him other bodies were hanging limply just where they had been caught when a German bullet overtook them. Meekin's outlook was not better than theirs had been. He was tearing savagely at his clothing in an attempt to break away. As fast as he cleared from one barb he was caught on another. Swearing hard he kept at it, his hands torn and bleeding. I stopped to help him and managed to get him out minus his kilts.

A minute later I turned the wrong way and found myself caught. Fischer came to my rescue and pulled me out. We were all but safe and yet in that narrow lane, in our own wire, lay the crooked path that had led many a brave lad to destruction when he was within a few feet of safety.

## VIII

### RATS AND COOTIES

CAPTAIN ARMETT stood out in front of the company reading orders. In front of him a couple of hundred soldiers were standing supposedly at rigid attention. In fact, however, they were twisting and squirming and wiggling in a most unmilitary manner.

As he read, Captain Armett frequently shrugged his shoulders and more than once sneaked his hand around under his arm and indulged in a good healthy scratch.

I had squirmed and wiggled and twisted as often as any man in the ranks. I had one spot, though, that no amount of squirming seemed to reach. I *could* stand it no longer. I sneaked my hand into the front of my shirt and——

"What's the matter with you, McCoy?" Captain Armett demanded with some severity.

"Nothing, sir," I responded, but I all but laughed aloud as I said it.

The captain took a look up and down the line. Everywhere he saw squirming men.

"Stand at ease. Stand easy," he commanded ex-

plosively and like a flash shot his own hand into his shirt and dug for all he was worth. We followed suit and in a few minutes were more comfortable than we had been for some time past.

Armett was the most human sort of fellow in the world. He was born of the aristocracy, very close to the nobility and wrote an "Honourable" before his name. But he was as human and as democratic as any one. So human and so democratic was he that the cooties made friends with him just as multitudinously as they did with the most humble of us. Poor old chap, he's dead long ago; died fighting bravely, too, but I've often thought it took more courage and more self-control to stand properly at attention when the cooties were attacking than it did to throw bombs when Fritz was on top of you.

The fact was just this. Every man among us from Sir Douglas Haig down was loaded with cooties. Cooties mean lice and the lice of the trenches are big fellows who multiply faster than any other species and grow faster once born. Every man who goes into the trenches gets his full complement of these pets. Indeed he gets them before he goes in, for he is absolutely certain to pick them up in billets where he probably sleeps in the hay or straw of some barn. Cooties are perhaps the chief factor in proving that war is indeed hell.

But cooties are also the chief factor in democratizing the army. Everybody has them, and they are with you always. The young duke, the Scottish miner, the cockney, the tradesman, the Yankee, everybody regardless of former position or habits of cleanliness, regardless of nationality, race, color, creed or morals has cooties, and they snuggle just as close to the hide of the general as to that of the fighting man in his dugout or on the firing step.

In our battalion were, besides Captain Armett, two young noblemen, both of them privates. Tom Hamilton, the son of Lord Hamilton, and Gordon, the son of Lord Gordon. When the war first broke out, it was the young noblemen, the young aristocrats, the young dandies whose principal occupations heretofore had been to twirl their canes and twist their mustaches, considered useless and worthless and held in contempt by the working classes, who volunteered and went first into the trenches. It was not the middle class, nor the toilers who did the volunteering, principally, but the young nobility. Thousands of them went out when we had little more than our bare fists to fight with, and thousands of them are lying "somewhere in France" where they fell bravely fighting for democracy and liberty. They took the discomforts and the hardships and the dangers of the soldier's life without a murmur. All that they had been accustomed to at

home was missing in France, yet they carried on without a whimper.

"I think I'll take my morning tub," said Tom Hamilton as, after Captain Armett had dismissed us, he screwed the remains of a monocle into his eye.

"I think you will, too, if I heard those orders correctly," I responded. Hamilton and I were great chums.

Included in those orders was one that this was the official bath day, and we had to take it whether we wanted to or not and we always wanted to.

A few minutes later the whole battalion was marching light over the cobblestoned roads to a little town where there had once been a brewery. The vats of that brewery were now the bath tubs for thousands of soldiers, where every time they came out of the trenches they must take their bath whether they liked it or not.

At the brewery we turned in our uniforms and were given a ticket for them, while our boots and equipment were carefully stacked up where we could most easily find them. Our underclothing all went into a general hamper, and we all went into the vats. Each vat held from eighteen to twenty of us, and as Tom, minus his monocle, slipped in he remarked in his droll way: "Aw! How I appreciate my morning tub, old top, you know."

But there was one thing about that "tub" which,



while beneficial, was not fully appreciated at the time. The water was as hot as we could bear it and was well filled with creosote. This was to bring death to our cooties but incidentally it all but skinned us alive.

From the "tub" we went out into a long yard where overhead pipes squirted ice-cold water on us. Lathered white we made a run through this outdoor shower and came back feeling like fighting cocks. Then after a good smart rub we were given clean underclothing and finally our uniforms which had been run through a steam chest in the hope that the cooties would cash in. Some of them did but others were only made the more lively by the heat.

We marched back to our billets and an hour later I saw the son of Lord Hamilton and the son of Lord Gordon sitting side by side, each with a candle flame carefully cooking out the seams of his shirt where the cooties were still in hiding. Never a smile crossed the faces of these two young noblemen. Their work was of a most serious nature.

The funniest pair of pals in our whole outfit was a little short Irishman named Casey and Big Tom Wilson, the giant Scot. Casey was not more than five feet in height while Wilson was past six and built in proportion. They were always together and apparently neither ever had a serious thought. They couldn't even hunt cooties without making light of it.



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**What's the Joke?**

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"Oh, such wee uns," Wilson would say pityingly, as he produced a couple of cooties and examined them affectionately.

"Gi yer twa wee uns for a big un," Casey would offer and after a lot of bartering, in which the relative merits of cooties large and cooties small were discussed, the dicker would be made. One cootie more or less in one's shirt didn't matter a bit and these two chaps by making fun of it all probably enjoyed life better than those of us who took it so seriously.

But cooties were not our only pets. We had others which while not so neighborly were equally numerous and quite as annoying. I made my acquaintance with these latter pets my first night in the trenches.

My deep dugout wasn't an ideal place for a night's rest, but I managed, finally, to find a position in which I could sleep, after a fashion. I was dozing when all at once one of the men sleeping near by leaped up and let out a most unearthly scream. Cold chills chased each other up and down my back, my flesh crept and my hair stood on end as I jumped up, more frightened than I ever was when facing death at the hands of Fritz.

Having let out that one unearthly yell, the man, cursing to himself, calmly lay down again, pulled his coat over his face and was soon once more asleep. The other Middlesex men who had been disturbed

merely moved uneasily, pulled their coats closer about their faces and slept on.

Fischer had been badly frightened, too, and it was some time before either of us could get to sleep again.

I had just dozed off when I was frightened stiff by feeling little cold, wet, clammy feet scamper across my face. It was my turn to jump and yell.

"What was that?" I shouted.

A Middlesex man who turned over, laughed scornfully and said:

"Rats, rookie. Rats. Cover your face!"

Well, I pulled my coat over my face and was just getting to sleep again when I felt more of those clammy feet scamper across my bare knees. This was one of the great objections we had to kilts. If you covered your face, then the rats would dance over your knees and if you covered your knees, they ran over your face.

The rats of the trenches are enormously big things, too. They have plenty to feed on and grow to great size. Usually they keep out of sight during the day but at night they are everywhere. And they have their uses, too, for they give the first alarm if gas is coming by running out of their holes, squealing hard and trying to escape. For this reason the French do not kill them as we did.

Most of them are harmless, for they have so much

to eat they rarely get to a fighting stage. Once, however, I did see one with fight in his system. I was walking through a travel trench when a huge rat came waddling out in front of me. I was close to him; another step and I would have crushed him, but I stopped. He stood up on his hind legs, curled back his lips and showed his teeth. He was ready to fight me. But my heavy boot caught him in the stomach and put an end to his disturbing career.

But the rats served another good purpose besides detecting gas attacks. At night we used to creep into the cook's quarters, saw the ends of bags open and help ourselves to biscuits. Next day the cook would be swearing at the thieving rats. But one day somebody took a tin of bully beef and that was fatal.

"By thunder," yelled the cook in a rage, "rats may steal biscuit but they don't carry can openers with 'em. Some of you robbers did that."

And so the rats were exonerated and the cold eye of suspicion fell upon us whenever anything disappeared. Somebody is always taking the joy out of life by trying to put too much in it.

## IX

### A CALL UPON FRITZ

"GET your bombs together. We go over at ten-thirty."

We had been in France about two months when this word came down the line one evening. It meant that we were to pay a formal call on Fritz and for the first time hand him our bombs. For some days we had been making them and now we were to have a chance to use a lot of them right in Fritz's front parlor bedroom.

Who would be the lucky ones chosen for the bombing party? It was announced that only thirty could go. When volunteers were called for every man responded, and I was fortunate enough to be one of those chosen.

We had nothing but home-made bombs then, as I have said; bombs made of meat tins and filled with nails, wire, and the like. The fuses were lighted from cigarettes and the bombs were quite as likely to explode in our hands as in Fritz's trenches.

I had three of these infernal machines and was all excitement with the novelty of this new experience

when at ten-thirty we climbed out of our front-line trenches. I had been through several attacks, had been up against mines, had been on wiring parties and all that sort of thing but this was the first time I had ever been on a bombing raid and the idea of this most dangerous of all activities thrilled me all over.

At this point Fritz's trenches were only about eighty yards from ours. We were to make the attack under command of Captain Hay and Lieutenant Graham. In those days we had no method of tearing up Fritz's entanglements other than by cutting the wires by hand. The artillery couldn't afford enough ammunition to place a barrage for us. It was a matter of nerve, and ability to work quietly.

Silently we moved out through our own entanglements and slowly and painfully crawled to within about thirty feet of Fritz's wire. Here all but six of our party stopped and lay flat upon the ground. The six, myself included, under command of Lieutenant Graham, crawled softly forward to open the way through the wires and make ready for the rush.

We were now so near the German trenches we could hear the sentries talking to one another, and occasionally the fragment of a song, for Fritz was apparently making merry in some of his dugouts. It took us probably fifteen minutes to worm our way to the first of the wires. Even though there was the noise



of occasional rifle or machine-gun fire with now and then the roar of a shell, it seemed under that terrible tension out there as if the slight scraping of our bodies on the ground as we crawled must have disturbed the kaiser's slumbers.

Up there in front of us, I could see the heads of the sentries and hear them talking. How they failed to see me I couldn't for the moment understand. But when I recalled how, when on sentry duty, I had been unable to see anything out in front, it was simple enough. I remembered also how I had frequently imagined I could see things when there was nothing to see, and I realized that Fritz had the same hallucinations and that even though he might actually see one of us, he probably would lay it to his imagination and think nothing of it.

At length we reached the wires, and began the hard and painful work in absolute silence. Crouching as close to the ground as possible we felt for a wire, located a post and then carefully cut the wire between where we were holding it and the post. To cut it otherwise would cause the wire to twang and instantly bring down the fire of Fritz upon us.

We had no gloves. In the darkness, working chiefly by feeling, I frequently ran my hands against a barb. Each time the blood flowed and it was with the greatest difficulty I kept from crying out.

I did think almost loud enough to have aroused Fritz it seemed to me.

Slowly and painfully we worked on those wires. My hands were torn and bleeding and I was tired and worn by the nervous tension. At last we had cut through as far as we dared. The rest must be done as we rushed and in the face of all Fritz could give us.

As carefully as we had crept forward, we must now creep back to the rest of our party. It took long minutes to do this but at last we were there, and all was set for the dash. First we must all crawl as close as we could, and as soon as we were discovered we must rush, cut the wires, throw our bombs, grab a prisoner or two and get back. We had little chance in those days, against the odds Fritz was able to muster, to do much if any damage to his trenches.

But before we began our forward movement we had to provide ourselves with torches to light our bombs. It was a precarious task lighting our cigarettes out there in front of Fritz and so near we could almost touch him. Carefully we shielded our matches, got our cigarettes going, covered them in the palms of our hands and began once more to crawl forward.

I could hear my heart thump as I moved up toward the head I saw sticking up above the parapet directly in front of me. So hard did it pound that it seemed to me Fritz must certainly hear it.

I could see Fritz's head right there in front of me. I knew that close at his side lay a rifle loaded and ready for business. I knew that in that trench with him were many more Germans, that they had rifles and bombs, that they greatly outnumbered us. I knew that Fritz was watching for us and that any second now, he or some of his friends might see one of us. The discovery would instantly be followed by a shot and then the world would come to an end in a hurry.

I moved another inch. I was very near indeed now; he must discover me soon. Another inch I pushed forward. The German started suddenly and then stood still. I was sure he had seen me. Crouching close against a post and scarcely breathing, I waited for him to fire.

I'm quite sure he saw me, but either he thought it but imagination or else he was fooled by one of his friends. The Germans are fond of dogs and their lines are overrun with them. Many a time Fritz has thought that what he saw out in front was one of his pets, when in another moment that "pet" was ramming a bayonet through him. So I suspect it was in this case. For an instant the sentry seemed tense and alert. Then I saw him turn his head and heard him speak to the man next on his right.

For moments I held perfectly still. Then we began to advance once more. Slowly our thirty men were

closing in on that trench, when a shout and a shot from the sentry at the right told us plainly we were discovered. There was no time for further introductions. With a yell we rose up; our cigarettes went to our mouths to be drawn into a blaze, we rushed forward lighting our fuses as we ran and tossed our bombs at Fritz. We cut the remaining wires and kept on.

We lighted the fuses to our bombs as fast as we could, and threw them among the Germans. I saw one poor chap whose cigarette no sooner touched the fuse than the bomb went off. He was blown to pieces.

In a moment we were in among the Germans. We cut them down and were cut down by them. A dugout was close by.

"Come up out of there," I yelled as I stuck my head into the entrance.

My reply was a bullet which passed over my shoulder and caught Billy Waddell square in the face as he leaned toward me. He fell. In anger I grabbed a bomb and threw it down the dugout. I don't know what happened down there except that the bomb exploded.

But we were in trouble. We didn't have a chance in that sort of raid. Fritz had all the advantage and he proceeded to make use of it. From every direction he poured a storm of shells and bullets upon us. It

seemed to me that every German gun in northern France was centered on our little band of Scots.

There was but one thing to do. We grabbed a couple of Germans and climbed quickly out of the trenches and started back across No Man's Land as fast as our legs would carry us. Not all of us, however, got into No Man's Land. Lieutenant Graham, as brave a man as ever lived, became entangled in the German wire and for weeks after his dead body remained there, a constant taunt to us all. Four others met similar fates so that afterward every time we looked over our own parapets we saw those five bodies hanging limply in Fritz's wires.

How any of us ever got across those eighty yards I have no idea. Many men fell in that dash but it seems a miracle that any of us escaped. Captain Hay had one of our two prisoners. As we ran I saw the captain was having trouble with his man, so I hurried over to help him but just before I got there, Hay, apparently having exhausted his patience and being in no mood to argue under the existing condition, pulled his revolver and shot the man. Then we both ran for our trenches and reached them in safety.

And those miserable muddy trenches never looked as good as they did then. We had seen all the hell there is this side of the grave and we were safe. Anything that could protect us from what Fritz was handing

out looked good to us now. But all our thirty men did not fare as well as I. Just eleven of us escaped unwounded. Lieutenant Graham and four others were still hanging over there in Fritz's wires. Six or seven more were badly wounded but managed to get in with the assistance of comrades, and seven or eight others were unaccounted for and probably dead.

We had a single prisoner to show for our losses. It seemed like a mighty small bag, but in a few moments we had reason to suspect we had inflicted greater losses on the Germans than we had believed.

There came a roar like a gathering tornado. Then it burst. From all up and down the line the metal came our way; until dawn Fritz deluged us with everything at his disposal. High explosive, shells big and little, shrapnel, minnenwerfers, machine guns, everything in his box of tricks was cut loose at us. For hours we crouched under whatever shelter we had and listened to Fritz pay us back for what our little band of thirty men had done in the few minutes we played around in his front parlor.

While the bombardment was frightful, while it reaped its toll and while we gritted our teeth, wondering if our time had come, we could not help but smile as we thought how thundering mad Fritz was to be willing to spend all that powder and metal in retaliation for the small damage done by one measly little raid.

## X

### PRISONERS AND COAT-TAILS

"CAPTAIN WAUR wants you at company headquarters."

The runner had come into the trenches with that order for me. I knew and everybody else knew what it meant. A raid was to be put on and it wouldn't be like the raids we staged when we first came out. Two years of experience had taught us how to do the job to a nicety, now that we had everything to do it with.

When it became noised through the trenches that I had been summoned to headquarters, everybody was on edge. Everybody was anxious to be in on the raid.

At headquarters I was given an outline of the work before us. I was to select sixty men from our outfit to form the raiding party. Captain Martin and Lieutenant Bayliss would be the officers in command but I was to organize the job. It was to be a big raid at a point and at a time that even I was not informed of.

I returned to the trenches and as a mere matter of form called for sixty volunteers from our battalion. Every man not only offered himself but demanded the

right to go. Then I was forced to pick the sixty lucky ones. I took Fischer, of course, and Sergeant Geordie Freel, and big Tom Wilson, who was the most accurate bomber I ever saw, Glassford, Crow, Rocks, Tom Cherry, Bob Malcolm, Sandy McNaught and little Meekin. These were my steadies and the rest I chose more or less at random.

We went back immediately to rest billets and set about with the utmost care to study every detail of the task before us. Incidentally we were treated like princes; we were given money to spend and time and opportunity to spend it; had the very best obtainable to eat and drink, and were permitted to stay up as late at night and sleep as late in the morning as we desired. Indeed the thought more than once came over me that we were being fattened for the slaughter. The expedition we were to go on was a dangerous one; all or none might come back.

Out in an open field a system of trenches had been constructed as nearly like those we were to raid as our engineers had been able to devise. We found later, that they were an almost exact duplicate.

Before these trenches we divided our forces into three parties and organized them, assigning each individual to his particular work. Each party was to consist of twenty men. Captain Martin was to have command of the party on the left flank, Lieutenant



Bayliss would command the center party and I was to have command of the party on the right flank. In addition there would be a signaler and a machine gunner with his gun on each flank.

The commander of each party assigned his men to their respective duties. I was first bayonet man for my party. I picked Glassford as second bayonet man to follow me and take my place if I got mine. Tom Wilson, of course, was made first bomber and Crow was picked for second. I also selected the bomb carriers and the rest of the party were the fighters who would clean up whatever we left undone and help us if we got more than we could handle.

For two weeks we studied and planned and rehearsed this raid.

"We want prisoners in this raid," said Colonel Sir George McCrae, who commanded the battalion. "You've been bringing me in a lot of coat-tails heretofore, this time I want the men. The coat-tails are valuable, of course, but the prisoners are more so. Bring them in this time."

As the Germans always carry their letters in their coat-tail pockets, we used to slash these off and bring them back. They were turned over to the Intelligence Department who learned whatever was possible from the letters and other documents they might contain. This is what the colonel meant by "coat-tails."

Our work during this rehearsing period was pretty much the same each day. We spent hours studying carefully the trench system, the ground around it, the location of the dugouts and communicating trenches and the machine-gun emplacements. In the afternoon, by means of a stereopticon we were shown a picture of the trenches we were to attack. These pictures had been taken by our air men and were remarkably clear and distinct. We could easily locate the communicating trenches, the various traverses and bays and most of the dugouts. Indeed we could see many little white spots, which were the men standing in the trenches at the time the photograph was taken. We could locate the machine-gun emplacements and everything else of value. Later developments showed these pictures also were wonderfully accurate.

For hours we studied the pictures until we could walk through our duplicate trench system with our eyes closed and each man knew just where he was to go without looking. This was manifestly necessary since we would attack in the night.

Each morning, too, we practised at the bombing school, to strengthen our arms and perfect our accuracy just as a baseball pitcher "warms up" to strengthen his arm and to locate the plate.

Too many times in the past when we had been told in advance of the time and place of a raid, we had

found Fritz fully informed and waiting to receive us. This time we knew nothing at all about either the time or the place.

It was about midnight when Captain Martin very quietly aroused us.

"Come on, boys," he said softly. "We go over at two-thirty. Get busy."

He didn't have to speak twice. We were all pep immediately. We jumped into our clothes and made ready as quickly as possible. We took no equipment whatever except our rifles, ammunition and bombs. Every letter, note-book and scrap of anything that might serve to identify us was left behind, even our identification tags were removed. If any of us were left over there Fritz would find nothing about us to tell who we were or where we came from.

In the darkness and excitement of the raid there is no time for introductions, so we blackened our faces and hands to distinguish friend from foe. A white face or a white hand meant death without question.

But we couldn't refrain even in this most ominous hour from a little fun. I had picked two rookies as members of the raiding party—we always took along a few of them to break them in and thus keep up our supply of experienced men, and when we blackened each other's faces, somebody produced a box of Cherry Boot Black and smeared the faces of these two brave

but inexperienced recruits. It was weeks before that boot polish wore off. Indeed fully a month later when one of these lads was killed, I saw spots of that boot polish on him as he lay dead on the field of honor.

We carefully sharpened and greased our bayonets, this latter so they would not gleam in the light of star shells.

Outside two big motor lorries were waiting to transport us as near to the trenches as they could go, and it was not long before we were in the front-line at a point where an old tree stump stuck up in No Man's Land. That stump was a welcome landmark a couple of hours later.

We were to make our attack in front of an English outfit and as we passed among them they slapped us on the back and said: "Good luck, Jock. Give 'em hell."

The German trenches were only about four hundred yards from us as we went over. Cautiously we ran along to within about fifty yards of where Fritz lived, then we divided into our three formations, lay down on the ground and waited. During our advance the star shells were continually going up, making it necessary for us to "freeze" every moment or two. Our own star shells were bursting and our own artillery and machine guns were rattling along about as usual, perhaps a little more noisily than common so as to drown any sounds we might make.

Fritz's wires had already been pretty well blown up by our artillery, so all we had to do when the time came was to rush. The way would be clear. The artillery was supposed to open up at two-thirty. I lay there on the ground watching the hands of my watch gradually approach that hour. Our watches had all been timed before we went in. For five minutes the minute hand crept slowly but steadily down toward the thirty mark. The minute hand was almost there. Just a few seconds more. I held my breath.

A roar. A crash. The ground shook. Flame burst over Fritz's trenches. The air, filled with screeches, vibrated with the concussion. I breathed again. The artillery had opened on the second.

A perfect tornado of iron screamed over us as we lay there. We could picture Fritz scrambling to his dugouts as fast as his fat legs could carry him, and we laughed.

"Give 'em hell, Briton!" screamed Glassford who lay alongside of me. And he laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks.

Fritz's line looked like a Fourth of July celebration. Everywhere, the glare of the bursting shells. Above him fifty-seven varieties of colored signal rockets decorated the heavens. Green, red, white, blue, he opened the whole box at once and sent them up frantically yelling for help.



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**A Kiltie at a Gas Sentry Post**

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ASTOR, LENOX  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

"Give 'em hell, Briton!" we laughed and yelled. "Can't you hear him holler for help. Give 'em hell, Briton!"

Out there we cheered those artillerymen on to greater exertions. They could not feed those guns nor pull the lever fast enough for us. 'All up and down the front as far as we could see the same thing was going on. Dozens of big raids were to be pulled off this night. For fifty miles, perhaps, the bombardment was on. Fritz knew he was going to be hit but just where was another question.

How anything could be left of him was more than we could understand for it looked as if every square inch of his trenches was getting a piece of iron.

"Give 'em hell, Briton!" We cheered and laughed ourselves sick.

For five minutes the artillery was to "give 'em hell." At two-thirty-five we were to give them our dose. I was watching my old timepiece. That minute hand crept along steadily. Just before it reached the mark the order was passed:

"Get ready."

Every man took a deep breath, hitched his belt a little, grasped his rifle tightly and gathered himself for the spring.

"Right."

With a yell we leaped up and at them. Theartil-



lery lifted a trifle to clear us. In a few seconds we had covered the fifty yards between us and Fritz. The artillery was now playing all around the sector we were to attack, cutting off reinforcements.

Like mad men we leaped on his parapet. I was ahead, where I belonged. With my bayonet pointed downward, I jumped with a yell into the trench. I had expected a reception committee but none was there to greet me.

The rest of my party came in in proper order; Glassford, the second bayonet man, then Wilson, first bomber, then the second bomber, the bomb carriers and the clean-up men.

According to plan I turned to the right, and holding my bayonet firmly ahead of me, started along the trench. I had taken but a few steps in the darkness when my bayonet came in contact with something. I drove it forward and a German yawped and dropped squealing to the ground.

"I've got one of them," I yelled back, and started forward once more.

"Toss 'em one in the traverse," I called to Wilson. I had reached the traverse and must now pass around a corner, not a pleasant thing always to do. With perfect coolness and precision, Wilson tossed his bomb.

"Now one in the bay," I shouted.

Wilson dropped it accurately.

I crouched close to the wall and cautiously stuck my head around the corner. By the light of bursting shells I saw a couple of forms huddled at the bottom of the trench. Wilson's bomb had done its perfect work.

I passed through the traverse, and adopting the same tactics looked into the bay. There again I saw a few bodies lying.

I passed along but we always took good care to make sure the seeming dead were really dead, for Fritz has a dirty habit of playing dead until we pass and then shooting us in the back. Our clean-up men followed closely and took good care of them now.

According to the picture there should be a dugout in this bay. Sure enough here it was.

"Come out of that. Hands up!" I yelled.

A flood of growling, guttural German came up at me.

Wilson dropped a bomb down the entrance and followed it with a smoke-bomb to make sure to finish the job. There was no more conversation. We came to another dugout.

"Come out of that and keep yer hands up!" I yelled.

Eight Germans came, the last a non-commissioned officer. His hands were not up, which was a bad sign, and he had a dirty smirk on his face that looked like

treachery. He made an insulting remark about the Scots, and little Meekin, who always went blood mad when once he got into action, ran his bayonet through the N. C. O. and left him where he fell.

Another German startled us by pleading for his life in perfectly good English. He told us he had formerly worked as a waiter at the Central Hotel in Glasgow and recognized some of us. He said he didn't want to fight us but was forced to.

"Shut up, you damned traitor," yelled Meekin, and started to run his bayonet through this one, too.

"Keep still, you silly ass," I said. "We want prisoners to-night. We've coat-tails enough as it is."

So we passed the German back and went our way. Wherever we found a dead body we slashed off the coat-tails. When we took a prisoner we slashed off his coat-tails, too, so we'd have the information in case we later lost the prisoner.

It was fast work; we had no time to argue; we just did all the damage we could as we went along. We were limited to one hour's time and now everything went exactly on schedule. If we were not out in one hour we'd be caught by our own barrage which would at a prearranged moment pour forth all it had on the trenches we were now in, in order to demolish them entirely.

The hour was up. I heard the fish horn which Captain Martin had swung around his neck, and blew mine in reply. Promptly we turned about and beat it for the spot where we had entered. 'At the same time the machine guns on our flanks opened up to prevent Fritz from following us.

Major Stephenson stood at the place where we were to go out giving a lift to each man as he came along. The major had been anxious to go with us but could not, so he waited at Fritz's parapet and as he helped each man up he slapped him on the back and said:

"Good boy. You've done nobly."

We were all out, and it was every man for himself across No Man's Land and back home. Fritz had opened up his barrage and the shells and bullets were peppering the ground all about us. It was dangerous business getting back, more dangerous than it had been coming over. Besides many of us had prisoners to look after which added to the difficulties.

By the light of bursting shells I could see men running in all directions, weird figures seen for a moment in that strange light and then lost in the blackness again. And nearly every man seemed to have a prisoner; it looked as if we must have captured the whole German army. Once in a while I saw a Scot with

about a half-inch of his bayonet stuck into the seat of a German's trousers intimating that it was time to hustle for the next shell-hole.

One of our men had two prisoners. They tried to play funny with him but he wasn't in a mood right then to be trifled with, so he stuck his bayonet through them and left them out there.

It was my business to keep watch for any of our men who might be wounded or otherwise in trouble and to help them. I found one lad with two prisoners who didn't appear to be on their very best behavior. I took one of them and perhaps I got the more fractious. Suddenly I found it altogether advisable to squat down in a shell-hole for the time being. And it seemed to be to my interest, too, that I should be concealed as much as possible and that Fritz should not know I was down there, lest some good marksman pick me off when I come out. My prisoner, however, didn't seem to catch my point of view. His big idea seemed to be that it was highly desirable his pals back there should know we were in that particular shell-hole. He therefore kept sticking his head up until I got somewhat peevish and grabbed my friend Fritz by the back of the head and shoved his face down into the water that covered the bottom of the shell-hole. I kept it there until he was all but drowned, and then I informed him in language at least firm that unless

he kept his knob out of sight I'd see that he got the permanent water cure. He obeyed.

It was two hours later when the last one of our party tumbled into our trenches. We had been guided in our ducking and dodging by that blessed old stump. One man only of our sixty had suffered any ill effects; a signaler had been painfully wounded although able to get back all right. We brought with us nineteen prisoners in all and a whole wad of coat-tails that we turned over to the English outfit, which gave us a big hand as we passed through on the way back to the lorries that were waiting to take us to billets. Here we were given plenty of money and went on "our own" to spend it. The colonel, even, had us up to his quarters and dished us up a real dinner. Oh, we were a cocky lot of Scotchmen until our battalion returned from the front line, then all our glory evaporated and we went back to the regular grind.

## XI

### HARD LUCK BATTALION

"HAVE a look here."

I mounted the fire step.

Over toward Fritz's line we could see a yellowish-white mist. It was pretty dense down near the ground and in the hollows.

We were on duty at the Brick Stacks near Bethune. It was about six o'clock in the evening. I was in the trench when the man on sentry duty called me to have a look.

"Do yer ken what that is?" he asked.

"I'm not sure," I responded. "But it might be gas."

You see, we had never yet had any experience with gas and were not quite sure what it was like.

The rats began running squealing from their holes. That was a pretty sure sign.

"Let's take no chances," I said, and jumping down from the fire step I grabbed the chunk of iron and began beating on the gas gong. Immediately the alarm was taken up all along the line for perhaps fifty miles and maybe fifteen miles back the "tong, tong" made the whole of that section of France a bedlam.

At that time we did not have gas masks such as they wear to-day. We had only sponges that we strapped over our mouths and noses. They were imperfect and many a man suffered ill effects even with his mask on.

Hastily I put my mask on. Everywhere the men were making a mad scramble for them. Some, in their excitement, tore the sponges and tried to hold them on with their hands. We had not yet learned the terrible results from gas, and so did not fully appreciate the mask. Many of the boys had become tired of the heavy sponges beating against their shoulders and had laid them aside. Now in their excitement they couldn't find them. Meantime the gas was coming fast.

I saw one man near me turn a sickly greenish-yellow. He had no mask; he couldn't find it. His eyes began to bulge from his head; froth filled his mouth and hung from his lips. He began tearing at his throat. The air wouldn't go into his lungs. He fell and rolled over and over, gasping and crying out while with his nails he tore open his throat, even wrenched out his windpipe. Then his chest heaved a time or two, and he lay still. Death had brought its blessed relief.

Somehow I couldn't take my eyes from him. That torn and bleeding throat, those wild eyes, the froth,



the greenish-yellow color all fascinated me. I stood looking at him in horror and in fear.

An arm came over my shoulder and grabbed at my mask and at the same time a harsh cry, like the croak of a jackdaw, sounded in my ear.

I whirled around. Never shall I forget the sight before me. There stood a man without a mask. The gas had already got him. He was mad with agony, but he still knew that he was suffering for lack of a mask, so he tried to snatch mine. His face was distorted almost beyond recognition. With one hand he clawed at his throat and with the other, the fingers bent like the talons of a great bird, he reached for my mask.

With almost superhuman strength, in his madness, he rushed at me. I tried to hold him off. If he got my sponge I'd die and it would not save him. One thing only was left for me to do. I struck the poor chap and I struck hard. He went down and for a few moments thrashed wildly about. Then he lay still.

Shells were falling around us. Fritz had opened up a barrage and right behind the gas and the barrage, came Fritz himself. Our dugouts were choked with dead; our trenches were littered with bodies.

"Fall back," came the order.

With hundreds of others I scrambled out of that death trench. The barrage lay to the rear of the trench

but death in that was preferable to death by the gas. Through it we raced. Here and there a man fell. Some were hit, some were falling from the effects of the gas, which seeped through their sponges. I began to have difficulty in breathing.

"Am I going to die as those other two lads did?" The question kept racing through my mind. I wondered if I was already turning greenish-yellow. My lungs hurt me, my breath came hard. If I must die, why couldn't a rifle ball overtake me.

My mouth was dry and parched, my tongue was thick. I wanted air and was sorely tempted to tear the sponge from my mouth. I had just will power enough to restrain myself, though my head swam and my legs were faltering.

What was that? A whiff of real oxygen came through my sponge; a little breath of fresh air fanned my face. Thank God! A gentle breeze had sprung up and had blown away the gas. I reached a first-aid station. Back to the hospital I was sent for observation; the gas I had inhaled might yet result fatally. For three weeks I was in the casualty clearing station, but out there in the trenches, around the Brick Stacks, three hundred of our battalion lay dead after having suffered tortures of which no man can tell.

As I thought of those brave lads done to death through the foul cunning and inhumanity of the Hun,

I longed for the time to come when once more I could get back at them and I swore to show no mercy from that time forth.

That determination was strengthened, too, by an occurrence I witnessed in the hospital. It was not necessary that I should remain in bed, as I was being held merely for observation, and as a matter of precaution. In that station one group of huts was set aside for wounded German prisoners, who were given the same care and attention that our own men were given, the only difference being that armed guards kept an eye on them. We could never trust the Hun even when he was being kindly cared for as a wounded prisoner.

I happened to walk into the German hut one day and was looking them over with some interest, when my attention was attracted to a very pretty little English Red Cross nurse who was busily engaged tending these barbarians. She was as cheerful, as kindly, as solicitous for them as she would have been for us. As she hastened past one not badly wounded prisoner she stopped, stooped over and said something to him. He, with true credit to the *kultur* they teach, spat in her face.

The English sentry happened to be handy, saw it and beat me to the prisoner, I'm sorry to say. The Tommy dropped his rifle and proceeded to give that

German one of the fanciest trimmings you ever saw given to any man.

Of course a yell went up immediately. Guards came rushing in, the sentry was arrested and ordered before a court-martial. He made no defense whatever, simply admitted he had beaten up the prisoner, and the court sentenced him to forty-eight days field punishment number one, which means being spread-eagled on a gun-carriage wheel. In pronouncing the sentence, the court said:

"You are a soldier. Your government provides you with a rifle and bayonet. You are not here to demean yourself by fighting with your fists as if you were in a brawl."

Incidentally, I am glad to add that man never served a second of his sentence. By what means he escaped it, I don't know, but I do know that I would have enjoyed the honor of being crimed, tried and sentenced for his offense.

But our losses in that gas attack were just a repetition of the old, old story with us. The Cameronian Scottish Rifles had earned their title of the "Hard Luck Battalion," and were living up to it. All over France we were known by this name. Drafted men hated to be assigned to our battalion. The jinx which had attached itself to us never once left us. We never had nor-

mal casualties, we always lost our men by the hundreds. If we got a draft of one hundred men to-day, we were certain to lose that many the next time we went into a scrap. We had made a bad start back there near Fleurbaix when we lost six men in the communicating trenches before ever we reached the front line, and death and disaster were with us ever after.

Many times there had been talk of disbanding us. At one time the word came along that we were to be sent back to England to be reorganized and to get a new start. That suited us all. We would be going home, and with a new start perhaps we would have a chance for a fair fight the next time we came into France.

But the rumors always fizzled out. Instead of going back to reorganize, we would receive a new draft, fill up our ranks, go into action and once more get cut up.

When we had first come out we numbered one thousand men strong. The day after that gas attack we had but three hundred, and mighty few of these were the men who left Hamilton that night back in the spring of 1915.

I was out of hospital now and feeling fine. We were in reserve trenches near Annequin, and had received another draft. "A Company" had gone for-

ward to relieve a company of Gordons in the first line, and just as the trenches were crowded with the men of the two outfits, Fritz touched off two mines. He got our first two lines of trenches and one hundred and fifty men and twelve officers out of our battalion alone while the Gordons suffered equally.

More talk of disbanding, but we got another draft and went back at it once more. Fritz put on a bombing raid. It was mighty successful and we lost one hundred and sixty men. The jinx remained right with us.

At last, however, official notice came that the Cameronian Scottish Rifles, the "Hard Luck Battalion," was to be broken up, to be sent to other units to fill their ranks. We went back to the billets near Beuvry and there the division was made. Fischer, Geordie Free-land, Glassford and the bunch I had always trained with to the number of two hundred went to the Royal Scots; another two hundred went to the Fifth Scottish Rifles; another hundred, including Jimmie Armstrong, who had first taught me to execute "Right turn," went to the East Yorks, an English regiment.

Armstrong later got a commission. He didn't want one because he had a family back home and officers get no allotment for their families and a first lieutenant but about two dollars a day pay. It is a relic of the old British army custom when officers were

of the nobility or rich men who bought their commissions and who needed no pay. The colonel of Jimmie's new outfit, however, was so anxious that he take a commission that, being a rich man, he agreed to pay from his own pocket the allotment Jimmie was then drawing for his family.

One interesting result of the division of the Cameronian Scottish Rifles was that we forever left our kilts behind.

It was a sorrowful day in Beuvry when the leave-taking came. Disaster had bound all the members of our battalion mighty close together and the parting was not easy. Tears glistened in the eyes of many a rough and hardy soldier as we stood at attention while the pipers played *Auld Lang Syne* and we watched Colonel Sir George McCrae leave us for the last time. He was a fine gentleman and a soldier and every man of us respected and loved him. When our battalion was split up, he went back to Blighty, forever out of the war.

Our colonel gone, our battalion separated into its three bodies and each yelling good-by to the others we marched away to the great base camp where we had stopped for a couple of days when we first reached France. We found a quarter of a million men there and more arriving every day. They were there from



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**The Kilties in Camp**



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every corner of the great British Empire—Scots, Irish, English, Welsh, Canadians, Anzacs, East Indians, everything.

As we marched into the camp we were met by a big major with a voice like thunder who acted as our guide. It was dark when we entered and a young captain, adjutant of the camp, saw or heard us coming. He had been out only a few months and had never seen the firing line. He supposed we were a gang of rookies and so thought it necessary to show at once what a regular fellow he was, so he began bawling at us in the darkness, when the big voice of our major broke in.

"Say. Who are you?" he rumbled.

The young captain bristled and informed us just who he was with all the trimmings at his command.

"Maybe you can't see who I am," growled our major. "But you'll 'Sir' me and you'd better be pretty decent to these men, too, for they have been through more than ever you will go through if you live a hundred years. You wouldn't make any mistake either if you took off your hat to them. Come on, now, where do you want us?"

The youngster came to earth immediately and we were assigned our quarters, and here they kept us for a month. It was just before the big Somme push

and they wanted us to rest up and recuperate until such time as the Royal Scots should most need a draft of veterans.

That month was a wild one, too. At first the young officers in the camp didn't know we were veterans and we didn't take the trouble to tell them. They would hike us out to the training field, give us a lot of instruction in bombing, raids, patrolling and other things they had never seen and which we had done dozens of times. We, of course, would do it the practical instead of their theoretical way until they were in despair at our refusal to learn our lessons.

They would start us on a charge for a line of dummies, and we would keep right on running until we found a soft spot, when we would sit down and light our cigarettes. Or they would start us on maneuvers, when we would get over into the woods and stay there. We were such a source of annoyance to the young officers and such a disorganizing influence in the camp that at last they let us alone.

It was indeed a big vacation, the first real one we had had since we came out. Then came the word that we were to move away to join our new friends the Royal Scots and away we marched for what, up to that time, was the biggest battle of the war.

## XII

### COWARDS

WHEN a man tells you he wasn't afraid under fire, you put it down he is—well, he's talking to hear himself talk. Every man who ever went under fire is scared stiff. Some have such control of themselves that they cover up their fright better than others, but all are frightened I don't care who they are.

Many a time I've been walking through a trench, heard a shell go screaming overhead, cocked my eye up at it and have said: "Aw, go to hell! You couldn't hurt anybody." But all the time, down underneath, I've really felt like ducking into a dugout.

While I say everybody is frightened, I must add that in the nearly three years I was in France I never knew a coward. I've seen men go trembling and white-lipped into the fight, but they drove themselves to it. That takes more courage than to go when you have better control of yourself and apparently are not frightened.

It makes interesting reading to tell of the coward who was shot at sunrise, or of the man convicted of cowardice and awaiting the firing squad who is saved

by chance finally to die a hero. I have no such stories, for, as I say, I never knew a coward while I was on the western front.

The man who is afraid, who shows it in every move, yet who forces himself forward, is a hero rather than a coward, to my mind. I knew one such fellow in our battalion and I never miss an opportunity to pay tribute to his memory.

Jimmie Keene's father died when Jimmie was a little lad. He was reared by his mother and sisters, and being the only boy was petted, and tended with the greatest care, and was never taught to wait on himself.

Jimmie never smoked, swore, played rough games with the other boys, never had a fight, never did anything that other boys do. He grew up a tall, lanky, not overly strong, studious youth. His morals were above reproach, and while his speech was somewhat sissified he was a lad with the highest ideals and with the highest sense of duty. That sense of duty told him he should enlist in defense of his country, and so he did not wait to be drafted.

With white face and trembling knees, Jimmie Keene presented himself to the recruiting officer and was accepted. From that moment he never ceased to fear; from that moment he never had a second when he was not expecting death, when his heart was not pound-

ing twice as hard as it should. From that moment he suffered all the torments that fear can devise until more than two years later, doing his duty like a man, looking Fritz straight in the eye, he fell fighting with his last breath.

Jimmie trembled all the way into France. He never ceased to tremble all the time he was there. In some mysterious manner, I never figured out how, but probably because he thought it his duty, Jimmie asked to be assigned to the bombers, commonly known as the "Suicide Squad." Bombers are not usually long lived and why Jimmie ever picked that position of constant danger I don't know.

My first real experience with him came after we had been out a year or so, when I was left in charge of a trench with a listening post out in front. Every two hours one man accompanied by a bomber went to the listening post to relieve the two who were there.

It was about midnight when I called Jimmie Keene to go out as bomber with Long Tom Crow. Keene turned deathly white and began to tremble when I told him what he was to do. For a moment he looked at me with bulging eyes; he couldn't speak, he couldn't move, his lips were trembling, and his knees sagged until I thought he was going to fall.

"Hurry up," I said to him gruffly, hoping by that means to steady him somewhat, for though we all

knew his weakness we all loved the lad just the same. "It's time to relieve those fellows; they don't want to spend the night out there."

I could see it was only by the most tremendous mental and physical effort that Jimmie forced himself to move. Crow was ready and those two lads out in front were anxious to be relieved.

"Hurry up, Keene," I called to him. To save his life that boy couldn't get into his equipment. He dropped it, fumbled around with it, did everything but put it on straight. His hands trembled and he didn't know what he was doing half the time. I could see he was useless and besides it was past relief time.

"Go on to your dugout," I said to Jimmie. "I'll get another man."

Jimmie instantly recovered himself; his sense of duty had been aroused.

"Corporal," he said in his somewhat ladylike way, "I must go. It is my duty to go. You insult me by sending somebody in my place."

"Go on to your dugout," I said. "You're in no condition to go out there. I've got to have a man who isn't afraid."

"I know I'm afraid, Corporal," he replied. "I'm deathly afraid, but it is my duty to go, and nobody else must take my chance."

"If you want to go," I said at length, "you sit

here for two hours and get your nerve and I'll send you out on the next relief." Now that next trick would be even more dangerous than this one because at coming-in time the light would be good for snipers.

"I shall be here and ready," said Jimmie. "It is my duty."

I got another bomber for Crow, and two hours later when I went to the place where I had left Keene, he was sound asleep but there waiting to take his turn. When I woke him he began to tremble again, and I was about to pass him up once more but he wouldn't have it. It was his duty and whether he was afraid or not he would go.

He was to go out with Tom Cherry, much to Tom's disgust. We had to help him over the parapet, and I went along with them to the listening post to brace up poor Jimmie if he needed it. He stumbled around, dropped things, tripped over the wires and had an awful time of it, but he got out there and he stayed there through his trick. I felt rather guilty as I left them there for I knew that if anything happened Tom Cherry would be all alone.

But they came back all right and the look of relief on Jimmie's face when he dropped into the comparative safety of the trenches was most wonderful.

The following day Fritz strafed us viciously, and



all day long Jimmie Keene was white as a sheet, unable to eat and suffering torment every minute.

"What are you trembling so for?" I demanded of him, when once I happened to be near him.

"I'm afraid, Corporal," he responded truthfully. "I'd give anything in the world if I could be like the rest of you. But I can't. I've been afraid ever since I joined up. I've been afraid all my life."

"What in the world made you join up?" I asked.

"It was my duty," he responded with some show of forcefulness. "My country needs every man. I wouldn't wait to be drafted. It was my duty to come and I came."

"But your duty doesn't make a good soldier out of you when you are so frightened," I said.

"Because it's my duty I can do anything whether I'm frightened or not," he said with a flash of real spirit. "If I am ordered to charge that machine gun over there all alone, I can do it because it's my duty to obey orders."

I began to get a new estimate of Jimmie Keene. It occurred to me that it took vastly more courage for him to force himself to do his duty, overcoming his fears, than for me to do the things I did without first having to undergo the physical and mental anguish necessary to put Jimmie in motion.

A few days later Fritz was giving us another tre-

mendous strafing, knocking our trenches about viciously. Everything he had in his box was being let loose at us. It was terrifying and nerve racking enough for any of us, but for poor Jimmie Keene——

“Bang” went a pineapple, a bomb Fritz used with telling effect. It exploded in our trench and Jimmie got a small piece of it in the face. The rest of it entered the back of a poor chap standing near, and he went down with eighteen ugly wounds.

It was not Pat McCoy, nor Jim Fischer nor any of us who were called fearless, but Jimmie Keene, his own face bleeding, who rushed to the aid of the much wounded lad. Jimmie knelt by the side of the boy and while the blood streamed down his own face, quickly opened the wounded man’s first-aid packet and began with trembling but careful fingers to bind up those gaping wounds. We watched Jimmie work, and none of us offered to interfere. We wanted to see if he really did have the stuff after all.

All the material in the wounded man’s first-aid packet was soon exhausted, but without hesitation Jimmie Keene opened his own though this was against the strictest orders. Each man’s packet is for his own use. He must not use it on others. I can imagine that it wrenched Jimmie’s heart thus to disobey orders, for his record was as clean as the day he joined up.

“Get away from there,” I said to him at length, for

I had become ashamed of letting Jimmie do that work in his condition. "Let me look after him."

"If you please, Corporal," said Jimmie, "I'll finish. It's my duty."

And Jimmie did finish and when the stretcher-bearers came for the wounded man, Jimmie walked with them back to the dressing station to have his own wound bandaged.

From that minute Jimmie Keene was mothered once more by every man in the outfit. Then one day on the Somme we got mixed up in a desperate scrap. We were hard pressed and every man was fighting for his life. We had attacked and were out in the open. I just happened to find myself near Jimmie. He was white as chalk and his knees seemed sagging. It was apparent that it was only by the greatest effort he was able to keep going. But all the time I noticed he was throwing his bombs with the greatest precision and with deadly effect.

A few minutes later I chanced to look toward Jimmie again, and I saw him fall. I knew he had been hit and hurried over to him. Three machine-gun bullets had caught him before he went down and there was just a breath or two of life in him when I reached his side.

"Please, Corporal, tell mother I did my duty," he whispered and was dead. I took his identification

disk, his watch and some other trinkets to send home to his folks. Jimmie had died doing his duty when every second his heart was pounding the germ of fear through his system. Jimmie Keene was a better man that ever Pat McCoy was, and he was honest in his life, too.

Only once during my service I knew of men being charged and tried for cowardice, and they were men from my own company. This was on the Somme.

We were in a trench which came to a dead-end. The Staffords' pioneers were to dig out that dead-end and to connect with another of our trenches. We were under a tremendous fire all the time. Our battalion was to go out in front to act as cover for the Staffords while they were at work. An officer of the Staffords was walking along the rear of the trench showing his men where to dig. Our trench was crowded at that time, for we were in, waiting to go out in front and the Staffords were there waiting to begin their digging.

The officer up on the parapet saw men out in front, and assuming it was a covering body, jumped across the trench and walked over to them. We were paying no attention to him nor to anything out in front. All at once we heard a yell and the officer came running back crying: "It's Fritz. Give him hell! Give him hell!" He looked as if half his head had been

blown away by the bomb the boche threw at him when he walked right out upon them. He died shortly after from his wounds.

It was lucky he had gone out, for otherwise Fritz would have been in upon us before we knew it. As it was he came quickly enough and it was hard fighting in the crowded condition of the trench.

"Let's get up out of here and go to meet them," Jock Hanna and Lewis suggested. "If we attack them, we'll mighty soon start them running the other way."

With these two were Dooty and Sandy Dowling all urging me to lead them in an attack upon Fritz. But the chances didn't look good enough to warrant so desperate an expedient at that time and I refused the permission.

Meantime Fritz was pressing in closer and closer, harder and harder. At last he was directly in front of us so that when I would throw a bomb I could see an opening in the mob where it exploded. But that opening was promptly filled up and Fritz kept coming on. Behind me Archie West was pulling the pins from the bombs and handing them to me to throw. Had we dropped one while passing, both of us would have been blown to glory in a second. Usually the thrower pulls the pins just before he throws. Until the pins are pulled the bombs are harmless.

As Fritz crowded in, word came down the line:

"Retire." We were pressed so hard, and the order seemed at first so reasonable that I was on the point of running. I saw the Staffords going and many of our own men. Then it came to me: "There's no such word or command in the British army regulations as 'Retire.' Had the command been properly given it would have been 'Fall back.' This is a German trick."

Quickly I called to all the men I could make hear: "Stand fast. This is a German trick." The word was passed along and our men returned to their places and fought back with renewed determination. We had lost precious seconds during the confusion, however, and some of our men were beyond recall, but in our anger we drove Fritz back and restored our position.

Then we began to count the cost. Doothy, Dowl-  
ing, Lewis and Hanna were missing. In the morning they returned and reported the reason for their absence. They had heard the order "Retire," in the excitement had forgotten there is no such command and seeing others going they went, too. They had gone on back to the reserve trench and hadn't known they were in wrong until in the morning some stretcher-bearers told them we were still in the front line. Then they hastened back and reported.

But under the regulations they must be reported as having fled in the face of the enemy, without orders.

Sergeant McKinnon and I were ordered to take them to company headquarters which was a deep dugout in the front line where shells were bursting every minute. Here the four men were officially charged with cowardice. I never felt so badly for any men in my life; anguish was written in every line of their faces. Of course they denied the charges and when they were asked if they had any witnesses I stepped forward.

"These men are not cowards, Captain," I said. "They didn't want to run. They were confused by the fake order that came over. I almost ran myself. Instead of being cowards, these four men asked me to lead them in a charge. They wanted to go forward to meet the enemy rather than back to get away from him. They are brave men and have been ever since they came out."

The captain knew all four of the men personally and of course knew they were not cowards. He understood the situation perfectly, but under the regulations they must go to battalion headquarters for their final trial. The captain did not deprive them of their arms nor confine them, but placed them in my charge and sent them back to the company until such time as they were ordered before the court at battalion headquarters.

Lewis and Hanna fell the next day, as they stood on the fire step fighting like heroes, and a day or two

later Dooty and Dowling went back to battalion headquarters with me. There again I told my story of their action and the colonel promptly discharged them with words of the highest commendation:

"I knew you were not cowards, boys," he said. "I have known you personally too long to believe that of you. I regret that under the regulations it was necessary to prefer the charges against you, but that has to be done for the safety of the army. However, you are not only discharged but you are also commended for bravery. Just remember hereafter, though, that there is no such word as 'Retire' in the British army regulations. The Germans have many times used this trick, sometimes with some success. Don't let them catch you again. My great regret is that I could not have made this statement to those other two brave lads before their time came."

That was the only trial for cowardice I ever saw in the army. There are no cowards. Some cover their fears better than others. That is all.



## XIII

### IN NO MAN'S LAND

I WAS feeling pretty cocky. I had been noticed by my captain. We had been out about three months when he ordered me to report to company headquarters. I must be of some account in the British army, after all.

I went to the headquarters dugout the envy of all eyes. Here I found three others, Lieutenant Woods, a tall gawky youngster nineteen years old but a mighty fine boy and a brave officer; Sergeant McClellan, and Private McDougal.

"I want you four men to do some patrol duty to-night," said Captain Hay in a most informal manner. "Lieutenant Woods will command. Your duties will be to go out into No Man's Land, gather all the information you can, learn anything you may think might be of value to us and come back. Especially watch for any sign that the enemy is preparing for an attack. You are not to fight unless absolutely forced to it. Information in advance is of vastly more importance to us than a few dead Germans."

That sounded good. It gave promise of being an

experience with excitement in it. Therefore it was welcomed, for the dull life of the trenches became irksome after a little.

"By the way," said Captain Hay, as we turned from him, "anything you would like to have sent home in case you do not return you should leave with your best pal."

"In case we should not return." "Anything you would like to have sent home." "Leave it with your best pal." Those phrases didn't sound as if our expedition was to be exactly a picnic or a pink tea. However, I turned over whatever valuables I had to Geordie Freeland and was ready to go whenever Woods ordered.

It was arranged that Woods and I should pair and go down to the right of the line while McClellan and McDougal should work up on the left. We arranged a pass word and of course the whole section of the line over which we would operate was notified we were out in front so as not to fire on us.

It was only about one hundred yards between the lines at this point, making the greatest caution necessary. Woods and I crawled down toward the right perhaps five hundred yards. Ahead of us we saw a number of tree stumps, remnants of a grove that had been shell shattered and torn. We were making our way toward these stumps and had almost reached them

when a German star shell went up. We froze instantly. Moving neither hand nor foot, we hugged the ground.

As we lay there, there came distinctly to our ears certain guttural sounds. We strained our ears. A most remarkable phenomenon of nature was occurring. Those stumps just ahead of us were talking; talking German, too.

Very carefully we crawled backward until we put a little distance between ourselves and those German speaking stumps, when we turned about and as rapidly as safety would permit worked our way back to our trench. There we reported what we had seen and heard. Fritz was about to try a surprise attack. We would be ready for him.

Four more machine guns were hastily brought up and placed. Every man, silently called from the dug-out, took his place just below the fire step and was ready for the word. Even Captain Hay borrowed a rifle and mounted the fire step. I took the place of one of the sentries. We could not put up more than the customary number lest we should warn Fritz that we were ready.

All was silent in the trench but our eyes were straining out in front to catch sight of those German tree stumps. Pretty soon I saw some of them close up to our wires. They would move a step, then stop

and stand perfectly still for a minute or two. They were coming. We were ready. But our position reminded me somewhat of that famous command given at Bunker Hill: "Wait until you can see the whites of their eyes." The thought sent a little thrill through me.

Slowly those stumps made their way through our wires. Behind me men were anxiously waiting, straining at the leash, eager to mount the fire step and blaze away. But we waited. Those stumps were inside our wires. They gathered themselves for the rush. They were not more than fifteen feet from us as they crouched for their spring.

Captain Hay fired. That was the signal. Instantly every one of our dinky little star shells went up lighting the ground where the Germans stood. The men in the trenches leaped to the fire step and began to blaze away. The machine guns purred backward and forward—they were mowing a swath through those stumps.

For an instant the attackers were surprised and stunned. Then without firing a shot or throwing a bomb, they turned and fled. But they were inside our wires. To get out in the darkness, panic-stricken as they were, was a difficult problem. We had fair targets to shoot at as they became entangled in our wires, and we shot them down. Not one of them ever got

back to his lines. Next morning about one hundred dead Germans lay out in front of our parapet or hung limply in our wires. My first experience in patrolling had been exciting and most highly successful.

From then on I did patrol duty nearly every night and at length became a patrol leader. The work grew to be a mere matter of routine and I became calloused to the dangers ordinarily involved. I went out so many times and came back unscathed that I began to believe I was immune. So I used to put on all sorts of side stunts in order to get a little more excitement out of the work.

There are always a lot of fellows who want to go on patrol duty, as it relieves the monotony of trench life and always gives plenty of thrills to the new men so they would have something to talk about.

Among this class of chaps was a regimental sergeant-major whom I will call Freddie. His duties not only didn't require him to go into No Man's Land but quite the reverse. However, he was always begging for a chance so one night we got permission for him to go along. Geordie Freeland, Sergeant Arthur Robb, Freddie and myself constituted the party.

A light snow lay on the ground. We were strolling about when over near Fritz's wires we discovered a well defined path. I immediately determined that Fritz had had a work party out mending his wires.

It was easy to follow the path and I could see that a little way from us it began to zigzag. Evidently that zigzag path was the way through the entanglements.

The spirit of bedevilment caught me, and I determined to give Freddie a real thrill if possible, something he could talk about for a month. I got the party close around me and told them to follow very quietly, but that if it became necessary to get out in a hurry to be sure and follow that zigzag path until clear of the wires, or we would certainly get caught and there would be no saving us.

Then I led off, crawling very carefully along that path with the others following. Behind me was Robb, then Freddie and last Freeland. We were among the wires now making our way with the greatest caution. We could hear Fritz in his trenches. Up above us we could occasionally see the heads of the sentries. We were getting nearer and nearer his parapet; could hear snatches of song, laughter and talking and always we could hear one German coughing. We guessed by the sound that he must be an old man.

We were inside the wires. I worked along cautiously, getting closer and closer to the parapet. As long as we were quiet we were comparatively safe, for Fritz would look over us rather than down upon us, we were now so close up.

I wiggled a bit nearer. I knew Freddie was trem-

bling and my only fear was that in his excitement he would do something to give us away. I was now so close to Fritz that he could hardly have seen me without climbing up on his sand-bags to look down.

To my left I could hear Fritz laughing and talking. I could hear him coughing to my right. Immediately in front, I couldn't hear a sound. For some minutes I lay perfectly motionless listening. Nothing happened in front of us, so I looked carefully and discovered a breach in the sand-bags. Apparently this part of the line had been under fire and I guessed that in this particular bay considerable damage had been done and the Germans had not repaired it and had probably left it unoccupied, temporarily at least.

Cautiously I crawled close up to the sand-bags that were left, propped myself upon my hands, and raised my head until I could look over. Nothing there. I pulled myself forward a few inches, and looked into the trench both ways. It was deserted. I pulled forward some more until my whole head was over the parapet; still I could see nobody in the trench. Then I carefully dropped over into the trench. Robb followed immediately while Freeland and Freddie lay close up to the sand-bags waiting for us.

My guess had been correct. The trench had been damaged by our fire and no effort had been made to repair it. A dugout had been caved in and some

wires strung around the bottom to trip anybody who might get in there. There was considerable water in the bottom of the trench, too. Very quietly I began to search around for souvenirs to prove I had been in a German trench. I went into the caved-in dugout and inadvertently I stepped into the water with a loud splash.

My heart stopped beating. Robb and I shrank back against the wall of the trench keeping as quiet as possible and not moving a muscle. Certainly Fritz must hear that splash. He would be on us in a minute. We held our breaths and listened. There was but one thing to do: sell our lives as dearly as possible.

We heard the sound of approaching voices and gathered ourselves ready for a fight in the dark. In front of us was a short and narrow opening which connected the trench in which we were with the travel trench in the rear. It was along that travel trench the owners of those voices were coming. To get us they must enter through that narrow opening. We should have the advantage for a minute anyway.

In a moment three figures appeared. One was apparently an officer, the other two were private soldiers. They stopped where we could see them and for a moment conferred. I believe they had been attracted by the splash I made, but evidently decided the noise did not come from that deserted fire bay, and moved



on. As they did so, the officer fired his star shell pistol and a star went sailing out over No Man's Land. Probably every sentry on the line was watching with straining eyes, but it was right there in their own trenches that four much wanted men lay. For several minutes we remained still, but hearing nothing more of the patrol party we lost no time climbing out of that trench.

Freeland and Freddie were waiting for us but Freeland had about given us up. Then we wiggled back down that zigzag path, out into No Man's Land and over to our own trenches. Freddie was about the cockiest youngster I ever saw when he got back and began at once to tell of his experiences. Had he not been right up against Fritz's parapet? And before the story was very old, he had also been in the trench. He was proud and happy as a father with his first pair of twins.

We reported what we had found and it was decided that this wrecked trench would be a fine place to initiate a raid. The raid was organized and when fifty of us went out a few nights later we had no difficulty going through the wires nor in getting into the trench. Then we began to do things.

We grabbed one officer, one non-commissioned officer of a machine gun outfit and four men including the fellow whose cough had annoyed me a few nights

before. We also killed a considerable number and destroyed a lot of dugouts.

When we came to get out of the trench, however, things were different. We had not demolished Fritz's wires going in, for we wanted to make our start right from his own trenches. Getting out was difficult and before we got back to our own lines we had lost seventeen out of our fifty men, which was altogether too expensive to be worth while. But the patrol work, getting into that trench with Fritz all around us, had been exciting and interesting. Patrol work always can be made exciting if you are not satisfied just to stroll around in No Man's Land.

## XIV

### WANTED—EXCITEMENT

DODGING bullets, ducking shells, patrolling and pulling off bombing raids may appear exciting to you, and it is in a measure, but it gets monotonous after a time so that out there on the western front we were always seeking diversions from what we called the routine of trench life. Perhaps it was pure devilment, perhaps it was the spirit of bravado, but whatever it was, we were always on the lookout for a new brand of excitement.

Lieutenant Woods, two other chaps and myself were on patrol one night. We had wiggled up to Fritz's wires and lay there listening for whatever we might be able to hear, when we suddenly determined to see just how near we could come to shaking hands with Fritz without getting caught at it.

Discovering a way through the wires, Woods and I wiggled in until we could see Fritz's head sticking up above the parapet. We had no definite idea what we were in there for but we knew that it might be serious business for us if Fritz should happen to see us.

I was just thinking what asses we were when a

hail came from the right. "We're caught," I said to myself, and waited for the expected bullet. But it didn't come. Instead, we began to hear the Germans up in front of us jabbering and a minute later we could hear them walking and talking as they made their way to our right in the direction from which had come the shout.

I looked up toward the parapet and found that even the heads of the sentries had disappeared. We wondered what had happened. Soon all was quiet in the bay just in front of us but over to the right there was a perfect babel of voices mingled with shouts and laughter.

We crawled along to the parapet and together we pulled ourselves up and looked over into the trench. Nobody home. But right under us stood a mail sack. It had just been opened—evidently abandoned when the shout came and a few parcels lay on the ground. Woods and I grabbed for it, pulled it up out of the trench and began to hurry back.

We got through Fritz's wires with our prize all right and were legging it for our own trenches when we heard an angry yell behind us, followed by much jabbering in German and a shot. Fritz had discovered the theft of his mail and to show his displeasure promptly opened up a heavy fire on our trenches. We got back safely, but Fritz turned loose everything he

had and gave us a fine strafing, while the men in our trenches gave us a fine cussing for what we had brought down upon them.

But it was worth it. That mail sack was filled with letters and parcels. The letters—afterward published to show conditions in Germany—we turned over to the Intelligence Department, but the parcels we opened. Here were all sorts of things that the folks back in Germany had sent to their friends in the trenches. Some of the parcels addressed to officers contained nice warm clothing and good things to eat. There were cigars, cigarettes, sausages, black bread, candy and I don't know what not. The parcels for the private soldiers did not prove a rich haul, which showed to our minds that it is not the officer class back in Germany that is suffering, that their families were living well and could still send comforts to their men, but the families of the poor devils who were whipped into battle were the ones who were really suffering.

For a long time there had been great rivalry among our men over watches lifted from the Germans. It is an unwritten law of the trenches that no watch or other trinket should be taken from the dead. The victim must at least be alive and preferably a prisoner. One member of our company had flied a watch which must have cost a lot of money, with a

stop-watch attachment and all kinds of little dials showing the year, month, day, hour, minute and second; and it also struck the hours.

I had been kidded to death because I had never got a watch. All I had ever taken was a German rifle that I had to keep supplied with German ammunition. They were always asking me, "Why don't you go out and get yourself a watch?" One night I did and I still have it.

It was only a couple of days after the incident of the mail sack that I was tolled off for a bombing raid. When I went out I determined if there was a watch in the German army I was going to have it.

We were in the trenches working fast. An unarmed German was standing in front of me. He had surrendered. I saw a watch chain hanging from his coat. The chain apparently was a heavy one so I figured the watch was probably a good one.

"Give me that watch," I yelled at him.

Right beside him leaning against the trench side was the rifle and bayonet of one of our men who had fallen. In answer to my command, the German reached for that rifle. He grabbed it quickly and was in the act of getting into position to use it when I drove forward with my bayonet. As he was falling I grabbed that chain and with a jerk soon had chain, watch and half his coat in my hand. I thrust them

into my pocket without looking at them and went about my business.

When we had got back in our own trenches I collected the gang around me and proudly produced my watch. That timepiece was just as good as any dollar Ingersoll you ever saw. I've never heard the end of it, and was kidded from Switzerland to the Channel. Every time we went on a raid after that one after another would ask me very kindly if I didn't want to leave my watch and other valuables before I got killed. But I still have the watch, such as it is, and the devil's got its former owner.

The Germans never did like the Scotch, and never did they lose an opportunity to abuse them by word of mouth or physically if they got hold of them. In the first place they were afraid of the Scotch, for when your Scotchman goes into battle he has on his face a look of determination with a capital "D." He goes at his man looking him steadily in the eye and when he lunges he lets loose a wild yell that carries terror with it. The boche particularly disliked those of us who wore kilts and gave us a name too obscene to repeat.

One day after we had abandoned the kilts and donned the pants, we saw something white sticking up over Fritz's trenches. It was so far away we couldn't make out what it was, but we were all curi-

osity over it. One of our officers through his field glasses made out it was a sign on which was printed in perfectly good English:

“You Scotch——. Where are your kilts?”

That set us all boiling, and we determined we would get that sign or bust. Several of us organized a party to go after it. Well along in the night we wiggled across No Man’s Land, in through Fritz’s wires, and at length were up to the sign. I reached for it and got it, but its disappearance was discovered mighty suddenly, and Fritz opened up on us. We got back with the sign but we lost four good men doing it, a pretty heavy toll for a piece of foolishness. The next morning we got our reward when we stuck it up above our trenches, and Fritz showed his anger by pounding our lines all day long.

We were always particularly anxious to get at the Prussians, for they are the meanest lot of men in the world; responsible for the war and most of the atrocities, they are treacherous always and never to be trusted under any circumstances. The Saxons usually are not so bad and we didn’t have quite the same hatred for them that we had for the Prussians.

We had reason to believe that Prussians were opposing us at one time, so we did everything we could think of to make life miserable for them. Our artillery pounded them, our machine guns swept their



trenches, we pecked at them with our rifles and we sought by every means to make them uncomfortable. One day we saw a sign above their trenches which read:

"Scotchmen, why are you so mad when peace is so near?"

Then we discovered they were Saxons who were opposing us and we took it a little easier. We tried to get that sign but never could quite reach it.

There are times when silence is more than golden and when if you happen to lose your head for just an instant the result may be disastrous. Big crazy Gillen of our company lost his and it cost us six men.

We were in a work party repairing the wires out in front of our trenches. Usually this is not a particularly dangerous job, indeed it sometimes happens that both sides will have parties out working on their wires and by common consent neither fires on the other. Sometimes, however, it is different and the time Gillen lost his head for a moment, let his anger get the better of him, was one of these times.

We were working quietly in our wires with a cover party out in front to keep off any German patrol that might drift our way. The sentries in our trenches had been notified of our presence so they wouldn't fire on us. The time came for the sentries to change and the one who was relieved directly opposite where we were

working failed to notify his relief that we were out there. Hardly had the new man taken his place when he heard us and promptly fired. He hit nobody but he made Gillen mad.

"You silly ass," yelled Gillen, "who are you shooting at? It's us. We're fixing wires."

Of course the whole German line heard him and promptly opened fire. We scrambled for the trenches but six of our men were caught before they got there.

Wires are bad business to get mixed up in, anyway. Once we had been on a bombing raid led by Major Clark. In getting back, Clark got caught in Fritz's wires and, with a half dozen other men, was killed. On him were valuable papers which our officers didn't want to fall into German hands. Immediately a reward of two hundred francs was offered to the man who would bring in the body. Every night man after man tried to win that reward, but Fritz knew what he was about and trained his machine guns on the major's body and the bodies of those others who had been caught with him. Of course Fritz had an absolutely accurate range and couldn't miss. The result was that many a man lost his life trying to get those two hundred francs.

I went out four times after them and every time escaped only by the skin of my teeth. Once I wiggled up so close to the major's body I could touch it. Then

a bullet plunked into it and warned me that I had no chance. But we determined Fritz should not get it either and so we had guns trained on it, too. The result was, of course, that that body was soon riddled with bullets and the papers were so mangled that they would have been useless to anybody. I was back there two months later and what was left of the body still hung in the wires. At length nature did its work and the body fell to the ground to become a part of it.

Many of our attempts to find excitement had a purpose; and sometimes we did tricks merely to try out some new method of mussing up Fritz and his trenches.

I was called back to company headquarters one day and from there was passed along to brigade headquarters. Here I met some other men and one officer from the Royal Engineers. We were informed that an engineer had devised a new scheme for demolishing Fritz's wires, that we were to try it out some night and would have a few days of practise.

The scheme was to fill a three-inch drain pipe eighteen feet long with our highest explosive, work it in under Fritz's wires and then touch it off by means of a battery, following close with a raiding party. It was figured this would be an improvement over artillery preparation since when we tore up wires with artillery, Fritz always knew something was going to



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happen. If this pipe could be placed under the wires without Fritz's knowledge and the raiding party followed close upon the explosion, the element of surprise would be assured.

For several days we worked with that big piece of pipe. We tried all sorts of methods of advancing it, for manifestly we could not just pick it up, carry it over there and lay it down where we wanted it. We must work it across No Man's Land a foot at a time, shove it under the wires an inch at a time and without any noise of scraping, either on the ground or on the wires.

At last we were ready to try the scheme out. It was so heavy it took as many men as could get hold of it to move it along. We worked our way across No Man's Land and began shoving it under the wires. I was on the front end and would lift and guide, while the rest shoved forward. Our machine guns kept rattling to drown any scraping it might make as the pipe touched the wires or hit the posts. We would shove it ahead an inch or two when it would strike something and stick. Then we would work it around a little and shove it ahead another few inches. It was the hardest work I ever did in or out of the army.

After a time the thing was almost in place when again it stuck. I was lifting and working on it when suddenly the blamed thing slipped forward, and up

against the barbed wires I came full tilt. Barbs entered my face and hands and the blood flowed from every wound. It took all the will power at my command to keep from yelling or cursing or doing something that would have given us away to Fritz.

Finally we had the thing where it belonged and scuttled back to our trenches, reaching them just a half-minute before the time set to touch the button to explode the pipe, and for the artillery to open up. The Suffolks were to make the raid and were out there ready to go forward immediately the thing blew.

An officer back in the trenches touched the button. Fritz's wires, with an awful roar, were blown all over France and the cleanest space I ever saw was opened for the advance of the raiding party. The Germans were thoroughly surprised and the raiders had a great chance at them, but we were always kind of sore about it, for we figured the Suffolks didn't do as well considering the opportunities as we would have done and we called their raid a failure and told them what we would have accomplished had we made it. Soldiers are much like spoiled children.

## XV,

### I HAVE FIVE SISTERS

EVERY day I am asked: "Hasn't your experience in France brutalized you? Hasn't it made you hold human life cheaply? How can you say you enjoyed sticking your bayonet through a German?" I have but one answer to all these questions. That answer is: "I have five sisters."

I had five sisters at home while I was over there. I knew the mothers and the sisters and daughters of many soldiers, comrades of mine. I knew the story of one little Flemish girl, for she told it to me herself. Whenever I went into action, whenever I saw in front of me a Hun, I remembered that little Flemish girl and my five sisters at home. Then with a yell of anger, I lunged forward with my bayonet and I'll confess I loved to feel the steel passing through German flesh and bone, and I laughed as I saw the Hun fall, squealing like a stuck pig, no longer a menace to my five sisters, and that little Flemish girl once more avenged.

For a long time the Royal Scots were near Armentières, our billets being located at Erquingham. Here was a little estaminet in which lived an old man and



an old woman with two young women, Lula and Anna and their two children. Both these young women had lost their husbands at Verdun. Lula had once been in the hands of the Germans for a short time, and while she didn't tell me, I'm sure her little square-headed baby had a German for a father.

At this estaminet we used to buy our eggs and milk and chips. The people were Flemish and because I could talk Dutch with them I soon gained their close friendship. One day not a great while before I was wounded and put out of the fighting business, a girl came to the estaminet. She was the niece of the old folks. She spoke only Dutch so I was able to make friends with her and to learn from her at first-hand, the story I can never forget, the story that made me laugh whenever I stuck my bayonet through a Hun.

I'll call the little girl Louise for the purpose of this story, for there are thousands of Louises in France and Belgium, to whom the same story might well apply.

Louise had been visiting relatives in Lille when the war broke out, and she was there still when the Germans came in 1914. She had not hurried away at their approach because she believed, as did all the rest of the world, that non-combatants and especially women and children and the aged, would be respected and well cared for. She did not know what the world

knows now, that the Hun wars upon women and children, the sick and the aged, the helpless and the innocent in even more brutal fashion than he does upon the armed men in uniform.

Hardly had the Germans arrived when she discovered her mistake but it was then too late. Once they were settled in the city, all the women and young girls were marshaled together. Several hundred of the younger ones were picked out and marched away to the château in which the commanding general had established his headquarters. Louise was then but seventeen years old and the most beautiful of all those young girls who were paraded before the general.

Like a fancier looking over his prize stock, the general looked over this array of young girls. His eyes fell upon the beautiful little Louise.

"You," he said, and pointed toward her.

Frightened half to death and not knowing what she was supposed to do, the girl stood fast. Two soldiers seized her and jerking her out of the line, half dragged her into the château. The general continued looking over his prize winners. Some fifteen or twenty more of the most beautiful were selected and sent into the château and assembled in one large room. No longer were they free women. Now they were the slaves and the playthings of the general commanding a great army supposed to be made up of civilized

men, and representing a civilized and highly cultured nation.

"It was not long after we had thus been assembled," she told me in Dutch, "that the general entered and took me away with him. I fought him with all my strength. I wept and pleaded with him. He laughed at me and struck me. I fought on and scratched him. With a yell of rage he called for soldiers. Two entered. They held me. Never again will I be able to look my mother in the face. No longer am I the girl she had taught me to be.

"The other girls suffered the same fate. We all wept and pleaded, but in vain. The general used to laugh at us and say: 'What are you squalling about? We're going to treat every woman in Belgium and France the same way. We're going to treat the queen of Belgium that way when we get her and we're going to make the king stand by and watch us.'

"They dressed us in the finest of clothing. Beautiful silks were brought and some of the old women were forced to make dresses for us. One poor woman was compelled to make a silk dress for her own daughter, and the general laughed at the joke and struck her when she wept. Beautiful as those dresses were there was little to them, just enough to cover our nakedness, no more.

"We were forced to do all the general's work. We

must serve him at table and that came frequently, for he was an awful glutton and gorged himself many times a day with half raw meat and wine.

"His favorite amusement while eating was to throw meat bones at us, scraps of food into our faces, strike us with his hands upon our half exposed persons and occasionally to beat us over our bare shoulders with his belt. If we happened to be in his way he kicked us, and always we were subject to his demands of passion.

"Whenever an officer of high command visited the general, that visit was the signal for a wild orgy in the château. They would sit at the table and eat and drink all night long and these were nights of the greatest terror for us. We were always dressed in our best and most costly clothing, and were subjected to every possible indignity that they, in their drunken frenzy, could devise. They pelted us with their food, they threw wine bottles at us, they kicked us and struck us and fought among themselves for possession of us. Not once but many times would we be subjected to them and the next day we would be kicked and cuffed because we were not so pretty nor so lively as usual."

For four months this little seventeen-year-old girl was kept in this general's harem, for that was all it was. In that time the brutalities and excesses had

begun to show upon her. Her beauty faded somewhat, she was no longer in favor with the general, he must have a new victim. Louise was turned over to the officers' mess for them to do with as they liked. Here, instead of one master, she had a hundred or more. Each misused her according to his own taste in blows, kicks and indignities of all sorts and kinds. And then one day there came into the world a little boy. Louise was his mother but his father may have been any one of many German beasts.

No longer did the officers want the little Flemish girl. She was a woman now, a mother. And so she was sent to the non-commissioned officers' mess. Here the number of her masters was increased and here she was treated even worse than a slave. Clothed in rags, misused, befouled, abused in every way a beast could imagine, she was made to work for them, to clean their boots while they cuffed her and spat upon her as she worked. Great patches of her hair were torn out by the roots. I saw scars half as big as the palm of your hand, where the hair had been torn off. I saw the great welts on her back where they had beaten her with their belts and canes.

Then the non-commissioned officers tired of her. She was no longer beautiful; she looked like an old woman, so she was sent away to the women's camp to be at the service of the men. This camp, she told

me, was a great enclosure around which was a heavy barbed wire fence and within which were many hastily and ill constructed huts. When a soldier was given a day's leave, he was also given a ticket, if he were himself free from disease, that admitted him to the women's camp where he took whatever woman he wanted to do with as he liked. No tainted man was permitted to enter the camp, he must seek his prey among those who were still at liberty and he must mutilate her as a warning to other soldiers that she was tainted.

All during this time, Louise had had her baby with her. Born under loathsome conditions though he was, the mother love could not be killed. But as she nursed him every drop of the nourishment carried with it the germ of hate for his father, and his father was the German nation. As she sung the little one to sleep, her lullaby was an admonition to grow up to hate the boche, to despise him, to kill him, to avenge his mother.

But now the little one was taken from her. Where it was sent she will never know except that it was sent to Germany to be reared and taught more of the *kultur* that had resulted in his birth.

The time came, and the opportunity, when Louise escaped. Her rags barely covering her nakedness, looking at least fifty years old, her once black hair

now streaked with gray, scarred and sick and once more about to become a mother, she managed, by what means she never told me, to make her way back to the British lines. It was after this, of course, that I saw her. Poor little girl! She died—a blessed relief—giving birth to this second child born of the Hun.

All over northern France this same story is being repeated by hundreds of girls who shared a similar fate. Thousands more will have it to tell when once they are liberated from the hands of the barbarians. Everywhere little children are growing up to hate all that is German. Everywhere are mothers singing songs of hate into the ears of their little ones. Everywhere you see French and Flemish mothers with their babies on their knees teaching them over and over again:

*"Anglais? Bon. Ecossais? Bon. Americaine? Bon. Boche? Ne Bon."*

And when these mothers say "Boche" hate glitters in their eyes.

A favorite form of showing off their youngsters to the foreign soldiers is for the mother to stand the little one in front of her, then holding up her finger, she asks the child the questions which he has persistently been taught to answer. Softly and sweetly he replies "*bon*" when the mother suggests "English, Scotch, American" and all of those fighting the Ger-

man, but when her eye flames and her lips explode the hated word "Boche" the little one's eyes flash, too, and he responds, in French, "No Good."

Everywhere you may see and hear it, this ripening of the seed of hate, the seed that will never die, perhaps the seed of a future war.

Yes, I loved to feel the steel enter the body of the Hun. Brutalized? Perhaps I have been. Hold human life cheaply? Yes, if that life is that of the Hun.

I remember little Louise. I have five sisters. That's my answer.



## XVI

### ALL IS FAIR IN WAR

**"ALL is fair in war."**

It's an old saying and the Huns apparently believe it, believe it so thoroughly, that it is always their alibi whenever they commit some crime or some act of treachery beneath the thought, even, of a civilized human being.

During my time on the western front I saw many instances of this treachery, I knew of many cases of barbarity and many, many occasions in which the German excused his act and sought to save his miserable life by pleading pitifully: "All is fair in war."

Of course that phrase is two edged. If all is fair for the Hun, the same holds true for his enemy. More than once I answered the Hun's plea for his life on the ground that "all is fair in war" with the statement: "Yes, you're right. This for you," and then I drove my bayonet through him and didn't feel I had done anything unmanly or unsportsmanlike either.

In our battalion we once had a lieutenant named Davidson. He was a most lovable man, brave and big-

hearted, even though somewhat effeminate in manner and speech. We called him "The Painter" and we were all always ready to fight for him to the death.

We had been in a pretty bitter scrap. The dead and wounded were thick around us. In a little shell-hole immediately in front of our position lay a wounded German lieutenant and several dead boches. The German was suffering intensely; writhing around and screaming every now and then in his agony. This was more than "The Painter" could stand. At risk of his life he left our cover and went out into the shell-hole to aid his wounded enemy. As tenderly as if the Hun had been his own boy, "The Painter" lifted the man's head and gave him a drink from his canteen.

"The stretcher-bearers will be here in a minute and we'll take the best of care of you," he said. "I'll try to hurry them."

Close by lay a Scotch soldier. "The Painter" went over to see if he was alive. As he stooped over the body, the German lieutenant, without a word of warning, jerked his revolver from under him and shot "The Painter" in the back.

I had been watching the whole thing, for I was fearful of just such an act. I had seen enough of the Hun to know better than to trust him. When "The Painter" fell I saw red at once. For an instant I was a wild man, just as barbarous as the Hun. Taking no

thought for myself I ran to that shell-crater. Murder—if you want to call it that—was in my heart. The Hun saw me coming and knew my purpose. As I approached him he began to wail and whine and plead for his life. "Don't kill me," he begged like a baby in perfectly good English. "All is fair in war."

"What's fair for one is fair for the other," I yelled at him, and without hesitation, without a feeling of compunction, I plunged my bayonet through him.

On another occasion a wounded German lay out in No Man's Land. He was suffering all the torments that pain and thirst could bring him. One of our stretcher-bearers couldn't stand the sight of his writhings, could think of him only as a man in torment. With his broad white stripe and red cross on his arm and the further precaution of a white flag in his hand, this stretcher-bearer went out to the wounded Hun; out in the open, in the broad daylight he walked straight toward the suffering German.

Not a shot was fired. At last, we thought, the Hun is showing some signs of humanity.

The stretcher-bearer reached the side of the wounded man and kneeling, raised his head and held a canteen to his lips. Even as he did so a rifle cracked over in Fritz's trenches, and a ball sped true to its mark. The stretcher-bearer, at the very moment of performing an act of mercy for a wounded enemy,

fell dead across that enemy's body, the victim of Hun treachery and Hun *kultur*.

Just once in my nearly three years on the western front did I know a German to show any mercy to one of our men. Once, and once only, a German officer gave evidence of a heart and he is the one man in the kaiser's army I should like to meet and shake hands with to-day.

We had been on a raid. One of our men had fallen outside the German parapet. When daylight came we could plainly see him there tossing about in his anguish. As we watched him we debated among ourselves if we would not be doing an act of kindness to shoot the poor fellow. For a long time we watched him, knowing full well the Germans were also watching him and probably enjoying the sight of his suffering.

All at once a German officer rose up from his trench, climbed over the parapet in full view of us, an easy mark had we chosen to fire upon him, walked straight to where the Scotchman lay, stooped down and gave the lad a drink. Then very tenderly he picked him up in his arms and took him over into the German trenches. Whatever became of the boy I do not know, but I am certain that so long as he was in the care of that officer he was cared for and well treated.

Our whole line sent up a great cheer for the German and we threw notes over thanking him for his brave and kindly act.

There are times when the opposing armies arrive at more or less friendly understandings. This is especially true in trench warfare and during those seasons when things are comparatively quiet. I remember we were opposite a Saxon unit—and as I have said, we were more inclined to trust the Saxon than the Prussians—at a time when things were inactive along the front and we got into the habit of trading back and forth. The Germans had little meat so once in a while we'd toss over to them a much prized can of bully beef, and in return they'd toss back black bread, cigars, cigarettes or whatever else they thought we would appreciate.

This bartering went on for some time until one day a can was tossed into our trench and we all rushed for it. The first man to reach it was just stooping over to pick it up when it exploded blowing the man to pieces. The Hun was up to his old tricks. We got even with him for his treachery and made him pay in dozens of men for the one of ours he murdered.

We were on a raid one night. An officer, with Sergeant Hill and a private, was working his way through the German trenches. We had beaten up the boche pretty badly and they were surrendering in

squads. These three reached a traverse and the officer ordered bombs dropped over into the next bay to make sure all was safe there. Before the bombs were tossed, however, the cry of "Kamerad. Kamerad. We surrender" came from the Huns in perfectly good English.

Hill and the private passed around the corner into the bay. As soon as they appeared the Huns opened fire and Hill was killed. The officer was raging. Gathering some men, I happened to be one of them, he took the lead and rushed around at their head. We soon discovered four Germans standing with their hands up and yelling: "Kamerad."

"I'll 'Kamerad' you," yelled the officer. "You've killed my sergeant."

"All is fair in war," they wailed.

"If it is," said the officer, "so is this," and with that statement, preventing any of us from interfering or taking any part, he drew his revolver and with his own hand shot each of the four men. Call it murder, or whatever you like, but the lives of four Germans is mighty cheap payment for the life of one civilized man like Hill.

In passing over ground from which the Germans have retreated it is never safe to touch anything. The most innocent and unexpected object is likely to be loaded with high explosive just waiting for somebody

to pick it up. They even load dead bodies so that when the stretcher-bearers attempt to remove them to give them a decent burial, they are blown to pieces.

I nearly got mine in such an experience. Indeed, I would have, had not a friend, who was with me, warned me. We were crossing ground the enemy had just been driven out of and were going toward our new trenches when I saw a fine German helmet a few paces ahead of me.

"Just what I want for a souvenir to send home," I said, and started to pick it up.

"Don't be a silly ass," said the chap with me. "It's probably loaded. Take a shot at it first to be on the safe side."

It went up in a million pieces and made a terrific noise. Had I touched it I should have been blown up with it.

In the little town of Castel, not far from Albert, is a cemetery the story of which is known to every soldier who ever fought in that vicinity. Before the war there was a big monastery in the town. In it were some two hundred priests and nuns. I heard the story from the old Mother Superior, who was then the sole survivor.

They had not fled when the Germans came. That the Hun would respect religious property and the priests and nuns nobody doubted. They found out

too late their mistake, just as the world has discovered its mistake. Every one of the priests was murdered. Every one of those nuns was outraged and killed. Out there in the little graveyard lie their remains, silent witnesses to German *kultur*.

One grave there is in that yard which is not of murdered priest or outraged nun. It is the grave of a German officer, said to be the nephew of the kaiser. One of the nuns before being overpowered, killed this officer and they buried his foul body along with those of his victims.

When we took Festubert, I was one of the squad which went about seeking out hidden nests of Germans, locating the wounded and the dying. It was our duty to search every house from roof to cellar, every hole and place of possible concealment.

In one basement we found several little boys, still alive but so mutilated that they can never be men, never be fathers with children of their own. Dozens of little girls from twelve to fourteen years of age we found dead and outraged. We found old women with their scalps literally torn off and one mutilated in this and other ways unspeakable, and with a bayonet thrust through her, the bayonet still pinning her body when we found her.

We found old men, too old to do harm to anybody, with their heads crushed in by rifle butts. Everywhere



were evidences of wanton cruelty and outrage until many a man vowed never again to take a German prisoner.

See what I have seen, and I saw all this and worse, and you'll agree with me that the only good German, is the German who has become fertilizer for the soil, who can never rear more of his kind.

How the Huns go about the business of making war and at the same time maintaining their manpower was shown by a letter taken from a German prisoner and read to us not long before I was wounded and left the front. The letter was written by a munitions worker in Berlin. I remember his first name was Hans and the letter was addressed to his brother, who was fighting on the western front. We took the letter from him when he was captured. Hans informed his brother that he has been assigned a certain district in Berlin and that he was to visit every unmarried girl sixteen years old and upward in that territory. The government was to give legitimate names to the children and to provide certain compensation for their care. Efficiency can not go further.

## XVII

### THE MAN IN COMMAND

LIEUTENANT BOGEY was out for revenge. Three brothers of his had the Huns killed and the lieutenant wanted vengeance.

Bogey was a big fellow standing six feet two inches in his stockings and built proportionately. He joined our battalion in 1916 just in time to get in on the big push. Immediately he won the heart of every man in the battalion. From the day he joined us he showed all the attributes of an officer, the kind of officer the men gladly die for. He was utterly careless of his own life or his own comfort, but he was most thoughtful and most careful of the lives and comfort of his men.

He had been with us only about a month when our whole battalion with some other units went over in a big smash. Bogey was then commanding the platoon in which I was. Our platoon and the one next on our left were held up in No Man's Land by a lone machine gun. The other sections of the line went forward without great difficulty. That gun was carefully placed and had command of our front

in such manner that it was utterly impossible for us to advance. It was spitting so fast that all we could do was to hug the ground while the bullets swept over us. Even then many of our men got it, just because they didn't happen to be quite thin enough.

Our delay was serious to the success of the whole attack. It left a gap between our two platoons and those on our right and left. If these others continued to advance while we were held up, their flanks would be open to an enfilading fire and perhaps give opportunity for Fritz to get in behind them. Our delay therefore was mussing up the whole attack, yet we couldn't advance in the face of that machine gun.

Lieutenant Bogey was not the kind of man to stand for that situation long. He knew what our delay was doing to the plan of the attack. It was with a thrill of horror yet admiration that I saw him leap suddenly to his feet in full view of the crew of that machine gun, a fair and open mark for that instrument of death. He was a magnificent sight as he stood there though. His more than six feet rose up like a giant. In his right hand he held a bomb and in his left a rifle. For just an instant he poised himself. Then he threw the bomb at the machine gun. He missed. But no sooner had that bomb left his right hand than he started forward directly in the face of that gun. All alone this brave young



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giant was charging with his lone rifle and bayonet a machine gun which could spit six hundred shots a minute and couldn't miss him except by a miracle. He had no more than one hundred feet to go, but he hadn't a chance. He fell and I'll venture the assertion that not less than fifty bullets from that machine gun found a resting place in his body.

But Bogey's sacrifice had given us the chance. In that instant when he held the attention of the crew of that machine gun, we leaped to our feet and went at them. They had no chance to turn their infernal machine on us. We took no prisoners. We avenged the death of as brave and as popular an officer as ever I knew. He need not have taken that chance. All he had to do was to order us forward and we would have gone gladly and happily into the jaws of death. But it was like Bogey. He did himself what he would neither order nor ask any or all of us to do. He died doing it and his people were sent the Distinguished Service Medal for his act.

Bogey was typical of the British army officer. A braver or a more democratic lot of men I never saw. When we first joined up, the officers were, we thought, inclined to be snobbish. We later found out, however, that their attitude was merely a part of the rigid discipline of the British army and that discipline made good soldiers of us.

Early in the war the British officers were practically all rich young noblemen, who bought their commissions in accordance with the centuries old custom of the British army. The pay of officers is very small and no allotments are allowed for their families. The pay of the officers would not keep them ten minutes and old N. C. O.'s of the British regulars could not afford to take commissions since they were financially vastly better off as non-commissioned officers than with commissions. Even now when they seek officers from the ranks it is hard to get them because of the poor pay. But early in the war if the officers didn't know much about the military game they did know the man game. Every one of them was all man.

When we first joined up it was not at all uncommon to see the captains and lieutenants and even higher officers drilling in the ranks with the men with some British regular sergeant putting them through their paces. They were willing and did learn the military game. But we used to wonder, as we saw some of these rich young dandies who had bought their commissions, what they would do when they got over into France and came under real fire and into real danger. We found out the first day we went into the trenches.

Every officer marched into the trenches at the head

of his men. They were the first to reach the firing trench and they saw us all assigned to our dugouts and taken care of before they took a thought for themselves. With their Sam Brown belts and their little slimsy walking sticks they were always plugging around in the trenches, always where the firing was heaviest, always going first wherever they asked their men to go. Most of them took great delight early in the war in walking around on the top of the parapets where we were forbidden to go because of the danger. They were up there, fair targets for German snipers, setting an example for reckless courage for the rest of us and more especially giving full evidence that they were not afraid.

But that Sam Brown belt and slimsy walking stick soon made them at all times the targets for German snipers. Whenever we went over the top for any purpose, whether in an attack, a raid, patrol duty or in a work party, the officers always went at the head. I've been over dozens of times when I felt ashamed. Here I would be with a good rifle and bayonet as protection. Ahead of me, the target for a dozen snipers, would be some young officer, some former dandy of London, twirling his walking stick, a cigarette in his mouth and perhaps a monocle in his eye, walking along as unconcerned as if strolling over his estate back in Blighty.



But the British government soon discovered that our system was all wrong. The German officers were always in the rear where it was comparatively safe. Their losses were insignificant as compared with ours. Now you can't make a real officer in five minutes and our losses in officers soon became serious. As a result they were ordered not to take unnecessary chances, their Sam Browns and sticks were left behind when they went into action and they were clothed exactly like the men, usually even carrying a rifle. But they went along with us just the same.

The slaughter of our officers, too, led to a new system. In 1915 it became more difficult to buy commissions and most of the officers from that time had some previous service in the ranks although usually they must still be men well fixed financially or else having no dependents to support. Lieutenant Woods, one of the best and bravest officers I ever knew, had served in the ranks. Lieutenant Bayliss had served as a private in the trenches and at nineteen was given a commission. Sandy Johnson was in my company. He had little education but was desperately in love with a school-teacher and I used to write his love letters for him. But he was a good soldier and a brave one and was given a commission.

Over in France all lines of birth disappeared in a hurry. We were all just men together, engaged in

the common business of killing Huns. The British army there became, I believe, the most democratic army in the world. Captain Armett, one of the finest of men and officers, married the daughter of an English lord and was himself of the nobility but he was just one of the men all the time. He died leading an attack only a few months after he married. Four machine-gun bullets caught him in the chest and two more in the top of his head as he fell. That's how fast a machine gun pumps lead at you.

Of course horses were useless in the trenches, but even the officers, except a few of the highest rank, didn't have them when we were back of the lines. Horses are almost as valuable as men over there and officers must get around on foot even when in rest billets.

So careful are they of horses that it was absolutely forbidden a soldier to climb up on a horse-drawn lorry or limber even though it might have no load on at all. That lorry might be absolutely empty and have four or even six horses drawing it, but no soldier was allowed to add a single pound to the burden of the horses. On the other hand if a motor lorry came along, the driver always stopped and piled on just as many men as could find a footing.

Back in rest billets the officers played cricket, football, ran races and played all sorts of games with the

men. Very properly it is a rule in the British army as in all others that no officer shall box with an enlisted man. But the officers always attended our boxing matches and many times the officers would get into the ring and fight between themselves while the men stood around and cheered them on.

The vast majority of British officers are most unselfish. The comfort of their men comes first and I've known many an officer to spend half the night trying to find more comfortable quarters for his men and never giving a thought as to where he would himself sleep.

It frequently happened that we would hike back perhaps ten miles from the trenches to go into rest billets. Tired, dirty, covered with mud and alive with cooties, we would drag ourselves at about dusk to some barn to which we had been assigned. Leaving us outside the captain would make an inspection and then come out and order us to make ourselves as comfortable as possible outside. Perhaps that barn had a leaky roof or the pigs and cows kept under it made it vile-smelling and dirty.

The captain would hike away perhaps two miles or more to the adjutant and inform him: "That barn you've got assigned to my men isn't fit for them to live in. I want something better." The usual reply to the complaint would be: "Well, it's all we've got."

Then the captain would walk away and seek a better place on his account. He might be gone half the night, covering eight or ten miles more until at last he would find a decent place to house us. This he would commandeer and then go back to find us rolled up and asleep on the ground while he had been walking. He would awaken us and tell us where he had been and what he had been doing. Of course he didn't have to explain his movements to us but it is the nature of the average British officer. Then he would lead us away to our better quarters and after we were all comfortably fixed he would find a place to sleep himself.

With the German officers the conditions were altogether different. Perhaps it was good judgment for them to remain behind their men during an attack. I believe it was, but I have known them to and have personally seen them do a lot of things which were most certainly not dictated by good military judgment but rather by pure cussedness.

Not long after we reached the firing line in France the Germans came at us in a considerable attack. We were holding our fire until they got closer although, of course, our artillery was busy with them. I saw here and there men in the advancing German line pitch forward apparently shot. Now I knew they were not falling from our rifle fire because we were not firing.

I felt certain they were not falling from our artillery fire either for while shrapnel does some mighty funny things a burst will hardly pick out a single man here and there and not touch those around him. In that attack we took a number of German prisoners and I asked one of them to explain to me what was getting those men I had seen fall here and there in their line. To my surprise and indignation I was informed it was the officers behind shooting them in the back. It was the custom of the German officers if they saw a man waver a bit in an attack to shoot him down, thus forcing the rest to go ahead.

I took occasion several times during my service to question German prisoners about their officers. I found that such practises were common. I learned, too, that it was a frequent occurrence for officers to strike their men on the slightest pretext, that failure to salute or just being in the way was sufficient reason to bring about a rap on the head with a cane or revolver butt or a blow with a fist.

In one batch of prisoners we took was a little fellow with a great ugly scar on the side of his face. I supposed he had been wounded and asked him about it. But he told me an officer had struck him with his revolver butt for failure to salute him. He told me the men were required to stand at attention even in the trenches when an officer passed and that if a sol-

dier happened to be walking in the streets of one of the occupied towns and an officer came along the soldier must step off into the gutter and salute as the officer passed by on the sidewalk. The officer might return the salute if he chose or if he felt like it he might strike the soldier just to relieve his mind of anything he had on it.

I learned, too, that no German dare report himself sick unless he was really very sick. When a man reports he is examined by two doctors. If they fail to find anything serious the matter with the man he is reported and recommended for punishment. That punishment is a public whipping and then confinement on bread and water for a period of days.

In one attack in the Big Push we captured a large batch of prisoners, among them many officers. They were all confined in one big barbed-wire enclosure until such time as they could be sorted out and sent to the prison camps. While we were back in billets we went to look at some of these prisoners confined in a cage near us. One little German boy, apparently not more than sixteen years old, attracted our attention. He was a weazened, underfed little brat and we took pity on him. We got a can of bully beef and some biscuits and stuck it through the wire to him. The way that boy went after that stuff looked as if he hadn't seen anything to eat in months.

But he had hardly got started on his banquet when a big Prussian officer came over to him, and with a harsh bark in German at the boy, he snatched the food away from the boy and hit him a rap in the face with his fist that knocked the lad down. Then he turned away and began to eat the food himself. Immediately we set up a yell and what we called that big Hun isn't fit for publication. But he didn't enjoy his feast long. Hardly had he taken the first bite when the English Tommy on guard, hearing our yells, came around. As soon as he saw what had happened he walked straight up to the Hun, poked him a couple of times with his bayonet, called him a few choice names and made him give back the bully beef and biscuits to the boy. Then with another prick of the bayonet he kicked the Hun away and stood guard while the boy ate. And if you could have seen the look of glee and satisfaction on that boy's face you might have gained an idea of what he had had to stand from his officers before he was captured.

I learned that the Prussian officers were cordially hated not only by their own men but by the officers of other breeds of Huns except perhaps the Saxons who do not differ greatly from the Prussians. The time I was so nearly gassed and sent back to the hospital for observation I had a fine example of this

hatred. As we were taken out to the ambulance to be sent to the hospital, a Prussian officer slightly wounded was seated in an ambulance alone. A badly wounded Saxon officer was brought out. He could walk only with the aid of a couple of nurses. They started to place him in the ambulance with the Prussian, but he immediately drew back and announced very positively that he would not ride with the Prussian. So strongly did he protest that he was finally placed in another ambulance.

And so while the British army is as democratic as any in the world, while the officers are real men and have a care for those they command, while they are loved and respected, the Germans, on the other hand, are hated by their men and apparently each hates the other. The men are merely slaves driven to the slaughter. Some day a big push will fail, the losses will have been tremendous and the suffering great. And then an uprising is coming in the ranks of the German army. And when it comes the slaughter will be appalling. Not a German officer will be left alive and mighty few Prussian soldiers will escape the wrath which the troops of the other German states will visit upon them.



## XVIII

### PALS

Do you know what it is to have a pal? I mean a real pal, not just a friend who will knock around with you, drink with you, work with you and play with you, not just a mighty good fellow who will send you roses when you're sick and lend you money when you're broke, but a real pal. If you've never been in places where all was discomfort, where death was beckoning you always, where every minute was likely to be your last, where your life might depend upon the instant and unselfish action and perhaps sacrifice of your pal, where you were always watching him and he was always watching you, ready and eager to die if need be that the other might live, then you don't quite understand what I mean by the term "pal."

Fischer and I were pals. Before the war we had been the kind of friends you know and understand, but we never quite knew how close we were until we got into France.

Over there where we fought rats and cooties and Germans together, where we shared each other's last crust and last drop of water, when we faced death

daily, shoulder to shoulder, we learned what it really meant to be pals.

More than once Jim saved my life and now that he is gone, I'm mighty glad that I was able to save his on one or two occasions.

We were on a bombing raid. Fischer was second bayonet man. As usual I had named myself first bayonet man, but I always felt a little better when I knew Jim was at my elbow.

We entered the German trenches all right, and, according to the plan, turned to the left. I posted my men to stop any Germans from coming in on our flank and was then ready to begin bombing dugouts. A communication trench right here must be cleaned out. Just a few paces up the trench was a little bend. It was necessary to know what was around that bend before we started to do much else.

"You men all wait here until I take a peek around that bend," I ordered.

I had rounded the turn and was out of sight of my men when all at once a Prussian, bayonet ready, faced me. We both lunged and parried. His bayonet passed over my shoulder and mine passed over his. Neither was hurt. I knew instantly, however, that here was one German of the very few indeed who knew how to fight with a bayonet and had the nerve to stand up and do it.

Quickly we were back on guard. I lunged once more. He parried deftly and I had to move quickly to parry his counter. I watched him with care. He was calm, determined, silent and skilful. He knew he had a fight on and was fully prepared to accept the gauge of battle.

This time he lunged. I parried and was back at him. He caught me, calmly turning my bayonet aside. I thrust again quickly. Bang! He brought his rifle barrel down with a smash upon my bayonet. The blade broke off short.

My heart sank. The end had come at last. Before me was a sturdy German fully armed. I stood helpless with my rifle but no bayonet.

The German showed his confidence and power by not exultantly rushing at me. He had won and he didn't propose now to lose by any false motions. He might have thought I would shoot him, but I had failed to work my bolt since firing the last shot. Now I had an empty shell in the firing chamber. I must work my bolt to eject that and to inject a live cartridge. To do this I must loosen my grip with one hand upon my rifle. Manifestly that would be fatal. The German guessed my plight quickly, possibly because he, too, was in that same predicament, but he had a bayonet.

He didn't rush. He didn't laugh nor gloat over

me. He was a true sportsman who had taken his chance and won. Slowly and with grim determination written on his face, he advanced upon me. There was nothing to do but retreat. Holding my rifle ahead of me ready to attempt to parry if he lunged, I backed down the trench. Death stood in front of me. My chances were one in a million.

I watched that German like a hawk. I could see his muscles tighten as he gripped his rifle ready for the thrust that would spell death to me. I saw his jaws grit together when—a rifle cracked back of me and a ball passed so close to my right ear as almost to burn it. The German, just on the point of lunging, crumpled in a heap. The rifle ball had caught him squarely in the chin.

I spun around like lightning for I was more frightened now by the closeness of that bullet than by the bayonet, which a moment before had glittered in front of me.

"Pretty close, that, Pat," said Fischer.

"You damned fool, what are you trying to do, shoot me?" I yelled at him and quickly added: "I thought I ordered you to stay back there." Then as he was near me I threw my arms around him and hugged him while the tears rolled down my cheeks.

Jim was one of the finest shots in the battalion and because of this had been designated a sniper. He had

come up the trench after me and seeing I was in trouble had taken a mighty big chance in sending a ball just over my shoulder.

And when that terrific strain under which I had stood for a few seconds had been suddenly and unexpectedly relaxed I just had to abuse Jim first before I thanked him.

In our battalion we had two chaplains, Father Lyman, the priest, and Padre Black, the Scotch Presbyterian. Two braver or finer men God never put life into. We loved them and they looked upon us as their boys and made no distinction because of our religious preferences.

Their one great regret was that they could not go into the fight with us. They did follow along as close behind as the regulations permitted and that meant they were usually not more than ten feet behind our line when we were advancing.

Both these chaplains went armed and they didn't hesitate to shoot if the occasion required, for the Germans took particular delight apparently in shooting our chaplains and Red Cross workers. During many an attack I have seen these two just behind the firing line caring for the wounded while the bullets and the shells were dropping all around them.

They had made for themselves tunics with tremendously large pockets and big belts thickly studded

with hooks. Before every attack they would fill their pockets with sandwiches and cigarettes and hang water-bottles all around their belts. Father Lyman could hardly stagger under his load for he was very small, but whenever a man fell either he or Padre Brown was quickly at his side with a bottle of water, and whenever we had a few minutes' respite in the fighting they were always there with the sandwiches.

It was not long after Jim had saved my life in the trench when the big Somme push came on. In August, 1916, High Wood near Little Bazantine, in front of Contalmaison and Pozieres was the scene of much terrific fighting. Time after time the wood was taken and retaken and always at tremendous cost.

Fischer was a Catholic. He had gone to Father Lyman, made confession and had received communion. Indeed all of us, Protestants and Catholics alike, knowing the hard fighting before us, sought comfort from the chaplains.

About six in the evening the word came back to us: "Bombers at the double." That meant dirty work at close quarters. It meant that somewhere British troops were mighty hard pressed, perhaps had been driven back a bit and must have help to reestablish themselves. I was in charge of the bombers of our outfit at this time, so I got them together and away we went at the double, following our guide.

Fritz had forced our troops out of an important trench. The Britons had returned to the attack, gained a foothold in the trench again, and all around the fighting was hand to hand in a great struggle for its possession.

I'll never forget the sight that confronted us as we reached that trench. Friend and foe were all mixed up together. Shells and shrapnel from German and from English guns were dropping in the struggling mass and men were dying by the hundreds.

At the double we ran forward and with a yell began to hurl our bombs. The sight as we leaped into the trench was sickening even to those who were accustomed to scenes of slaughter. The trench was choked with bodies, many of them dead. English and Germans lay together where they had fallen in the final struggle. Blood was everywhere. Suffering and death were all about.

But there was no time to think of it, no time even to see it in all its awfulness. The situation was desperate, but our arrival gave us the balance of power, and the Germans were pressed back from the trench. But they came on again, wave after wave. Our artillery—and their own as well—blasted holes in their solid masses. Our machine guns cut them down and our bombs made gaps in their lines only to be quickly filled with fresh sacrifices. Fischer stood beside me.

Each of us had a man pulling the pins from the bombs and passing them to us ready to throw.

Fischer suddenly clapped his hand to his shoulder. A piece of shrapnel shell casing had ripped the shirt from his left shoulder and cut a considerable gash in the flesh. I turned to help him:

"Never mind me," he said. "It's nothing. Keep on giving 'em hell."

He turned away, and presently found a stretcher-bearer who bandaged his wound and started him back afoot to a dressing station.

Fischer looked toward the spot where we were fighting, hesitated a moment—he told me afterward—and then came back to his place by my side.

"What are you doing here?" I yelled in his ear. "Go on to the rear where you belong."

"You'll get yours in a minute. I'll wait for you and we'll go back together," was his response.

His right arm was sound so he got a man to pull pins for him and began throwing again.

So close were the opposing forces that our shrapnel had to explode just in the rear of our line and spray out over us to get the enemy in front. Every shell must be most carefully timed and must also be a perfect shell or it was likely to get some of our own men. A shell from one of our batteries came whining overhead. Something was wrong with it; it



was going low. The next thing I knew Fischer lay dead in the trench beside me, the top of his skull blown away.

My arm fell nerveless at my side and the tears rushed to my eyes. For a moment I couldn't see the Germans in front of me, I couldn't tell where to place my bombs.

But it could not be so for long. Fritz was pressing hard. Fischer's body was in the way as it lay there. I took his identification disk and other valuables.

"Give a hand there," said a fighting man.

I looked at him. Then we took poor Fischer's body and tossed it up over the parapets out of the way—we must have room to plant our feet and to fight. And we did fight! It was six in the evening when we went in; it was ten the following morning when we were relieved. There had not been an idle moment during that time.

As I went back I saw Fischer's body still lying where we had tossed it. Oh, how I wanted to give it a decent burial, but there was no time.

Somewhere in France, in a ditch with many others, friends and foes together; somewhere in France in an unmarked grave lies the body of my pal,



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## XIX

### FRITZ'S BACK YARD

It was in August, 1916, during the big Somme push, that the British for the first time really attempted to test their driving power against the German lines. A flank attack was being made out of Little Bazantine on Combles, over a front of about four miles. The Royal Scots were in the front line ready to go over. We were to leave our trenches at two-thirty in the morning and were to be replaced by the Suffolks. We made our way out and close up to Fritz's trenches while our guns let loose upon him. But he let loose at the same time so that No Man's Land was being peppered with every kind of shell and bullet Fritz had, while his trenches were getting everything we had.

We lay hugging the ground, watching the bombardment, urging our own gunners to greater exertion, wondering when one of Fritz's shells would get us. I rolled somewhat on my side and chanced to look up. Above me was a heavy cloud of smoke, a whirl of metal and a glare of light from the bursting shells. Suddenly I rubbed my eyes. Was I alive or had I already passed to the next world? I pinched

myself. It hurt. Was there really something in that story of the "Angel of Mons"? I was alive and my eyes were open. But it was hard to believe. Up there above the field of death, apparently in the thickest of the flying metal, I saw a snow-white dove. For a moment I couldn't believe it; then I remembered that both sides were using homing pigeons for messengers. This one had been released, and probably stunned by the shocks, had lost its direction and was flying aimlessly about unmindful of shot and shell.

At three-ten came the word: "Ready." Each of us grasped his rifle a little firmer, looked to see that everything was right, rose to one knee and waited for the dash. Two minutes later came the command: "Right." And we went in. Our barrage lifted for us and Fritz came out of his dugouts and gave us a taste of real hell.

Our orders were to follow the barrage and it had been stated the barrage would probably go to the third-line trenches which would mean that we would halt in the second line. It was each battalion for itself, for in that *mêlée* there could be little communication between units.

We fought our way through the first line and into the second line. Here Fritz came back at us hard. Stubbornly we battled with him hand to hand all along the line. The units on our right and left flanks

were driven back. We knew nothing of this at the time for it was impossible for any signal to be heard, impossible for a runner to get through.

Somebody in our battalion finally noticed our isolation and ordered us to fall back. That order never reached our platoon. We stood there battling for our lives. By chance I happened to look back. My eyes nearly popped from my head for behind us I saw the Germans. On both sides of us were Germans; in front of us were Germans. Eight of our fifty men stood there alone, surrounded. Retreat was impossible. It was every man for himself, and the devil stood a good chance of getting us all. I called the attention of the other men to our predicament and each began to look out for himself.

I decided my best chance was to go forward. I saw a little clearing, leaped out of the trench and made for the open space between the second- and third-line German trenches. Of course I was in as great danger of being hit by British shells as by German bullets. I made for a near-by shell-hole. In it lay a dead German. "You shall be of some use in the world, although you never were before," I said. Into that shell-hole I crawled and pulled that corpse over me as if we had both died there fighting.

Shrapnel from British guns fell all around us—the dead German and me. None hit us, fortunately.

The battle line moved back as the Germans regained the lost ground. I was left farther and farther in the rear, yet British shells never ceased to rain on all the territory around.

I heard voices—German voices. Quickly I closed my eyes and held my breath. A German officer, I took him to be, and a soldier passed the rim of the shell-hole. They stopped and looked at us. That the man would come into the shell-hole and stick a bayonet into me to make sure I was dead, I was certain. They stood there talking. Then the talking ceased. I strained my ears for the sound of their approaching footsteps. I had a vision of them standing above me, bayonet poised and ready to strike. It was only by an effort of the will that I refrained from curling up as I knew I would when I felt the steel. I suffered all the pain of the wound so certain was I that it was coming.

When I heard them talk again and knew that I was safe once more I almost screamed. Their voices were growing weaker. They were moving away. The tears started, as once more I opened my eyes and knew they had gone. Then a short time after, from sheer exhaustion and nervous strain, I fell asleep.

How long I slept I do not know. What dangers there were in that sleep you can easily guess. Had

those same two Germans passed me as I slept they might have seen me breathe, might have heard me snore, for I slept heavily. I might have moved in my sleep. Had they passed again I never would have awakened in this world.

When I opened my eyes I found it was dark. I looked at my watch. It had long ago stopped. I lay a while and thought. I couldn't remain here. I must make a try to get back to our own lines. The worst I could get was a bullet, a bayonet or perhaps capture. I might get back, although, realizing I had to cross two lines of German trenches, the chances seemed mighty slim.

I was hungry and terribly thirsty. I had had nothing to eat since we entered the fight at two-thirty the morning before. My water-bottle was gone and I was suffering greatly. I threw off the dead German and searched him. First I wanted to know what time it was and thought perhaps he might have a watch. But he had none. Neither had he water-bottle nor anything about him to eat. But he had saved my life so I suppose I should not have complained at these little oversights.

I began to crawl. Carefully, inch by inch, I made my way in what I supposed was the direction of the second-line trenches. Shells from British guns fell occasionally in the area through which I crawled and



one fragment fell so near me that I reached out my hand and touched it. It burned my fingers.

I noticed with a start that a light wind was blowing from the British trenches in my face. Suppose they should launch a gas attack! I felt for my gas mask. Then I breathed a sigh of relief. It was there.

I guessed it must be getting toward dawn. Suddenly out of the darkness came a German challenge. My heart leaped into my mouth but I had sufficient presence of mind to lie perfectly still, to freeze. Evidently the sentry thought it a dog or that he had been "hearing things," for he did not challenge me again. Like a crab I began carefully and slowly to crawl backward until I was out of sound of this sentry. I could see a streak in the eastern sky. It warned me it was time to take cover for the day. I found a shell-hole, crawled into it and lay there without food or water until darkness came again.

At one time during the day I was startled by the sound of Scotch and English voices quite near me. I was close by a communication trench and probably the voices were those of prisoners being taken to the rear. I wondered frequently as I lay there if it would not be wise to go out and surrender. But that prospect was worse than my present hunger and thirst so I determined to wait until night and once more attempt to reach our own lines.

Exhaustion finally overcame me and I slept. It was night when once more I opened my eyes. I had no German to frisk now, so I lost no time in crawling out of my shell-hole and starting on my way once more. I still had all my equipment and my rifle. But my water-bottle and my iron rations were gone. The equipment was a burden and nothing more, but I held on to it as a result of training and a matter of pride.

I had not gone far before I came to the communication trench along which the Englishman and the Scotchman had been walking. Like a snake, with my head close to the ground and working only with my elbows, I inched myself up to that trench. Then I lay still and listened intently for the sound of sentries' voices. I heard none. I pulled myself forward a bit more and a bit more, until, raising my head, I peered cautiously over into the trench. I looked both ways. Nobody was in sight. Silently I lifted myself to a crouching attitude, and then I leaped across, falling on the other side as a football player falls upon the ball. I lay perfectly still a few minutes, but heard nothing. I had crossed that trench without being discovered.

Once more I began to crawl, and once more out of the darkness came a challenge. I was approaching a second-line trench. I lay still again, but nothing

happened. So I crawled backward and when at a safe distance I turned to the right and paralleled the second-line trench. I crossed one more communication trench in safety, then I again worked up close to the second-line trench and began crawling from bay to bay seeking one not occupied.

At length I came to one where all was quiet. I approached it an inch at a time and peered in. As nobody was in sight, I leaped, fell on the other side and lay still. Nothing happened. One main line trench had been safely crossed in my wiggle toward the British lines.

But the front-line trenches still lay ahead of me. There was the last serious barrier but it was the one where danger was greatest. Here the sentries would be more keenly alert. Could I make it? Hunger and thirst and the nervous strain had weakened me, yet it was nerves that kept me going.

I was just behind the front-line trenches and I could hear Fritz jabbering away. As I reached each bay I paused to listen. But I must hurry or day would break before I could make it. I had gone slowly and painfully along a considerable distance when I reached a bay where all was quiet. I raised my head to look in, and for an instant my heart stopped beating. Standing with his back against the front wall of the trench with his face looking di-

rectly into mine stood a German sentry. For what seemed an hour we looked at each other. I expected a yell and a shot. Neither came. He did not move a muscle. Whether he was asleep or just brooding so deeply that my slowly rising head had failed to impress itself upon him, I shall never know, but he made neither sound nor motion.

Very gradually I withdrew my head and very carefully I pushed my body back from that danger spot. Still no sound from the sentry. I moved back farther and farther. Then I lay down to recover my nerve. At last I moved again, past one bay after another, listening always to the chatter of the Germans within.

Once more I came to a bay where all was still, and again with even more caution than before I crawled up. Slowly I raised my head, my heart thumping so hard it almost made me sick, and looked the length of the bay. It seemed deserted. I pulled my knees up under me, leaped and landed over the parapet in front of the first line. To my infinite surprise nothing happened. The worst was past.

By the time I wiggled out through Fritz's wires, dawn was upon me, so I crawled into a shell-hole just outside the entanglements. And none too soon, for a British shell came screaming overhead. In an instant hundreds more followed. Briton was bombard-

ing Fritz's trenches. My chances seemed mighty good for stopping a piece of one of those shells, but I lay close while Fritz got his. Fortunately I was just far enough outside the entanglements to escape the fire.

When a man's in a pinch he does all sorts of funny and foolish things. Here was I, two long days without food or drink, weak and exhausted physically and nervously. Death was all around me now, beckoning me, reaching out for me, but not quite touching me. There came to my mind as I lay there the picture of Glassford out in No Man's Land under our barrage waiting to attack and yelling in high glee: "Give 'em hell, Briton! Give 'em hell!" And I laughed myself and repeated as Glassford had: "Give 'em hell, Briton! Give 'em hell!"

So intense was the bombardment that I looked for our troops to attack. I hoped they would, for then my troubles would be over and I would go back behind our own lines. But they didn't come and the bombardment died down. Fritz, however, was apparently expecting an attack for no sooner had the British fire quit than the Germans opened up a barrage in No Man's Land expecting to catch British troops in it. Fortunately I was near enough to Fritz's wires now to escape his barrage just as I had been far enough away to escape the British fire. For an hour they kept it up.

I determined to get out of my equipment. Lying on my back I wriggled out of it but I still clung to my rifle and my gas mask. At length the Germans quit firing, and I began to crawl once more for the British lines. I dare not remain out another night and I must make the trenches during daylight for to attempt to reach them at night would probably draw the fire of some of our sentries and I didn't care to die that way.

From one little knoll to another and from one little depression to another I worked my way. Two or three times German snipers caught a glimpse of me and fired, but they didn't get me though they came near enough.

At length, almost exhausted and feeling my strength and nerve going fast, I determined to get up and run for it. As I lay there considering my chances when Fritz should open up, I happened to remember some of the *Diamond Dicks* and *Buffalo Bills* I had read in my youth and to the great scandal of my family, and I recalled that the hero always managed to outwit the Indians by running zigzag. I determined to try it.

The time had come when I could make better headway without my rifle, so I left it in the little depression in which I was hiding, gathered myself for a spring, took a long breath and beat it. Weak though I was I made Arthur Duffy and all the other famous

sprinters look like plow horses beside me. From one side to the other I jumped but keeping always toward the British lines just ahead.

Fritz's snipers opened up on me but Diamond Dick's methods proved successful. Over the two strands of wire, which was all we had in front of our trenches at this point, I hurdled and without looking below dropped into the trench.

An English Tommy was cleaning his rifle as I came in. I landed squarely on his shoulders, knocking him down of course. He was too surprised to speak and too frightened to move. He thought the Germans had attacked.

I made myself known as the men crowded around me, plying me with questions and filling me with tea. I took one big cup of it boiling hot, then I sat down and cried like a baby. My nerves at last had cracked under the strain and it was necessary to take me to the rear.

Lieutenant Sutherland took me in charge and gave me a pull at a flask. Then he opened some cans of sardines, gave me hard biscuit and a cake of chocolate. No finer banquet was ever served by the Lord Mayor of London.

Along with others I had been reported missing and the report was already at headquarters. Lieutenant Sutherland sent a runner to stop it and al-

though the colonel had sealed it and had it ready to go, he tore it up and determined to wait in case somebody else should also come in.

And one other man did come in that night. A fellow named Penny tumbled into the trenches. He had been out in No Man's Land during the day, while I was there, but had decided to wait until night before coming in. He all but lost his life in doing so for the very thing I had feared happened. He was fired upon by one of our men who fortunately missed. Penny was a wreck, however. He spent the next six months in the hospital before he was ready for duty again.

Four of the eight men who were cut off out there returned; two came in the same day of the fight and Penny and I later.

But it was a sad company I returned to. Captain Arnett had been killed and so had Sergeant-Major Cameron and many another good fellow who had gone into the *mêlée* that day. I have often thought of that German sentry who looked me in the face but didn't see me and I have wondered whether he slept with his eyes open; but asleep or not, he saved my life by not taking it, and I wish him luck.



## XX

### VULNERABLE

FOR more than two years I had fought the fight against the Hun. For more than two years I had had all the excitement that the greatest war the world ever saw could produce. If there was anything in the fighting line I had missed it was because it was not to be found on the western front. For more than two years I had passed through it all and had returned practically unscathed. I had suffered a little from gas and had a bit of a scratch on the cheek but neither amounted to anything. My time had not yet come and I began to believe it was not to come in this war. Men had been shot on each side of me, in front of me and behind me. I had all but lost out when the big German had broken my bayonet but always something had intervened to save me.

Achilles had a vulnerable spot on his heel. April 9, 1917, Easter Monday morning, I learned that I, too, had a vulnerable spot, and that spot was my left arm just below the elbow.

The British high command was planning a big push at Arras. As early as January tenth we made

our first move which was eventually to bring us into that fight, although when we moved we marched directly away from it.

In heavy marching order we left Fleurbaix the evening of January tenth. All night long we tramped through mud and water and snow in the coldest weather France had known in years. Directly north we marched, grinding along hour after hour, wondering if ever we were going to rest again.

At length we were in behind Ypres. That we were to attack here we felt certain. We took battle formation and moved up in sight of the enemy. Little attempt was made to conceal us. Fritz had a good look at us and our aviators reported he was massing troops to resist our expected attack.

Night came again. Instead of resting or moving up into the trenches as we had expected, we were once more put in motion but not toward the enemy. Instead we executed a wide circle and were soon headed south again. Five hours out of twenty-four was the most that was allowed us for rest and that we took in the open, usually on the bare ground in the snow and mud and water.

The nights were bitterly cold. We usually slept close in groups for warmth. But a few, from exhaustion, would walk back from the roadside and lie down by themselves. Next morning we must kick

them to awaken them. One morning three of the men in our battalion failed to respond to our kicks. Exhausted with the march and the cold, they had frozen to death. In our brigade eight men altogether thus clicked it.

Day after day we kept marching southward until at last we were in the vicinity of Arras. Here the roads were jammed with troops and with transports of all kinds. Long lines of lorries and wagons were moving forward and back. Always one line was moving toward the front, while another, usually empty, was returning. Artillery, ammunition trains, supply wagons, everything needed to prepare an army for a great smash was in motion. Through this great mass of vehicles we tramped in single file working our way among fighting, swearing teamsters, dodging horses and motor vehicles until at last we went into hutments ten miles behind the lines.

Here were our headquarters. So many men were up in front that there was room for no more. In the morning we must march out of our hutments, drill that ten miles to the trenches, do whatever work was there for us to do and at night march back once more over that ten miles of mud. Or at night we would march up to the front line, pull off a bombing raid, perhaps, and in the morning, tired and exhausted, march back again for rest.

That it was to be a big push was manifest by the large number of troops, the great masses of artillery, the tremendous amount of ammunition and supplies being constantly brought forward. Since it was to be a big push a vast amount of preparatory work must be done. Saps must be dug; trenches must be strengthened, material must be brought up by hand from the last points to which the vehicles could approach. Patrols were out all the time. Bombing raids were of nightly occurrence.

Freeland, Crow, Glassford and all the gang with which I trained were there—all except Jim Fischer, and many a time we spoke of him and wished he could be with us in the big fight about to come.

April third we went into the trenches at St. Catharines. April seventh, the Saturday before Easter, word came down for me to report to headquarters. From company headquarters I was sent to battalion headquarters. A big raid with one hundred men was on for that night. Thirty of the men had been drawn from our company but all were rookies and strangers to me. Captain Cowan was to command. The airmen had reported that Fritz had apparently evacuated his front-line trenches, so we were to go to his second line and grab off a few prisoners for identification and information.

It was to be a rush job with no rehearsal, for the

time was at hand when we were to launch our drive. "Get prisoners and bring 'em back alive," was the only order we got.

The ground conditions and the weather were the worst in the world. The mud was up to our thighs so that just to walk was all a man could do.

Ten-thirty in the evening was the kick-off hour. We went out according to schedule. Captain Cowan and I reconnoitered the front line and found the airmen were right. Fritz had evacuated it. The artillery opened up on the second line and we were given forty minutes in which to do our work. We rushed the second line and began bombing dugouts.

I yelled down a dugout, ordering the Germans to come up. A shot was the reply but it missed me as usual, and I laughed, for I was full of the idea that I was invulnerable. But I was angered at the German who had shot at me and having a Stoke's mortar, an infernal machine weighing about thirteen pounds, I tossed it down. It quieted all who were there.

In the next dugout we got one weazened little German boy, not more than sixteen years of age, undersized, underfed and scared to death. This lad and one other about like him, were all the prisoners we got. And we paid dearly for them, too, for we lost Captain Cowan and five men before we got back with those two measly little Huns.

As soon as we were safely back in the trenches a party of us went out into No Man's Land in search of our lost men. We thought perhaps we might find them wounded. Four of them we found dead, but Captain Cowan and one private we failed to locate.

Then we went to our hutments for a brief rest. At four-thirty Easter Sunday we hiked it back through the mud to the trenches once more. While I was dragging along in that mess, I thought of the folks back home and of the Easter parades they were perhaps seeing. I wondered if my sisters and friends were going to church dressed in all their new Easter finery and I laughed in spite of myself at the appearance of the Easter parade in France in which I was taking part.

Lieutenant Fleet was in command of our platoon. He had already lost three brothers in the war and was the last boy in the family. He had come out for revenge and he got it, too.

At five-fifteen Easter Monday morning we were ready to go over for the big attack. At five-thirty we were over. In the German front line we found no one. We had been given seven minutes here to make certain nobody was concealed in the dugouts, to come out later and attack us from the rear. Then we went on to the second line.

We took no prisoners here. We were in a hurry,

having only an hour in which to clean up the trench, and were anxious to get on to the third line where we knew we should have hard fighting. We cleaned up the second line in a half-hour and set out flags to signal we were ready. We promptly got the order to carry on.

The third line was choked with men who gave us a hot reception. We sent back some three or four hundred prisoners here and cleaned up as quickly as we could. It was no time for courtesies and we killed as fast as the opportunity presented.

"Somebody's calling you, McCoy," a man said to me.

"You're crazy," I replied.

But from the bowels of the earth just at that moment I heard distinctly the call: "Pat McCoy."

I stopped an instant. Near me was a dugout from which I once more heard that cry: "Pat McCoy."

I recognized the voice. Foolishly, very, very foolishly, so foolishly that I ought to have lost my life, I plunged down into that dugout. Half a dozen Germans were huddled there, but all that I saw was a stretcher on which lay the form of Captain Cowan. Without a thought of the enemies all about me, I grabbed that man and hugged him. How it happened I don't know, but the Germans stood back. Per-

TORLUISH,  
GRANGE LOAN,  
EDINBURGH.

I have pleasure in stating  
that Pte P. J. McCoy served  
under me in France when  
in Command of the 16<sup>th</sup> Batt  
"The Royal Scots".

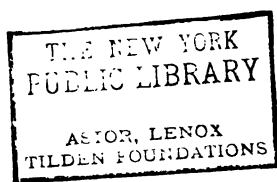
He volunteered repeatedly  
for raiding duty & showed  
great coolness & courage  
in the face of danger.

I regret to hear he has  
been wounded, & trust that  
he will meet with success  
in civil life as a fitting  
reward for his valuable  
services in the field.

George McFarlane Lt Col  
"The Royal Scots"

26. Nov 1916.





haps they had had enough of war and were glad to be made prisoners. At any rate they had their chance and didn't take it.

Both Cowan's thighs were broken and because of his helpless condition, the deep mud and the heavy British bombardment, the Germans had not been able to send him to the rear. I yelled up the dugout for help. It came at once. We sent back the Germans and immediately got stretcher-bearers to care for Captain Cowan.

Then we got the word to carry on. Out of the third-line trenches we climbed and advanced toward the fourth. Up the line of our company came a message passed from mouth to mouth from Geordie Freeland: "How's Pat McCoy?" Foolishly and thoughtlessly again I stepped out ahead of the line so I could look down to where Freeland was. Then I waved my left arm above my head. An instant more and a ball caught me just below the elbow. A sniper seeing my wave had suspected I was an officer giving a signal. His aim had been true. The force of the blow spun me half around.

"Pat's got it," I heard somebody say.

"Carry on," I called to Lance-Corporal Knowett, and began seeking shelter. I found a shell-hole and crawled into it, suffering tremendously with the pain, for the bones of my arm were smashed and protrud-

ing through the flesh, with the blood pouring from the wound which had been made by an explosive bullet.

In the shell-hole I found a man with a great gash in his thigh. He was trying to bind it up but could not get at it. I helped him as best I could with my one arm and succeeded to some extent in stopping the flow of blood. Then I propped him up a bit and he bound up my arm.

I could walk but he was helpless. I crawled out of the shell-hole, found stretcher-bearers and sent them to him. Then I started back toward a dressing station. I threw away all my equipment except my water-bottle. This I hung to, for I was terribly thirsty, as are all men when wounded. But progress was slow in that mud and I retained only what I most needed.

At last I met more stretcher-bearers. I was becoming so weak I could hardly move. They insisted on carrying me, but the mud was so deep they could make no headway so, with a man on each side of me, I tried to walk again.

There were two men not far to my right. A shell came over and blew them from the face of the earth. It threw me probably fifty feet and left me unconscious, a helpless nervous wreck lying there in the mud.

About midnight stretcher-bearers found me all but

dead, mumbling and quivering from shell shock. They took me back to a dressing station where my arm was bound up decently. But I was all through. So far as I was concerned, the war was ended. Never again would I face Fritz. He had at last found my vulnerable spot.

## XXI

### MOTHER

I WAS taken back to the casualty clearing station and labeled as among those hopelessly wounded. It was not the wound in my arm but the shell shock that made my case so serious. I was strapped fast to a stretcher so I could not move and there I lay quivering and trembling and mumbling to myself, starting at every slight shock or sound, unable to control myself, a wreck.

Around me were wrecks of what had once been men, wounded in the most horrible manner. Life still flickered in their tortured bodies, flickered for a moment and then in one after another went out. The station was a long building and the stretchers bearing these wrecks were piled in tiers four stretchers high. None here was expected to recover. We were the hopelessly wounded.

Through my mind as I lay there passed the vision of my mother and sisters. I had always been big and strong and husky, somewhat wild, and had, I suspect, caused my dear old mother many a heart-ache in the days back home. Out here on the battle-

fields of France I had been called a devil-may-care sort. I was the "mad Yank" to all who knew me. I had believed myself invulnerable and had learned to laugh at danger. But now among the hopelessly wounded my only thought and my only desire was to see my mother.

I realized I was expected to die and I didn't care much if I did. It would bring relief, but before I went I wanted to see my mother. If she could only come to me just once, I would gladly die. And then, great big boob that I was, I lay there and bawled, bawled for my mother and was not ashamed.

What was that? A soft voice spoke to me. Surely it was the voice of a woman speaking in my own tongue, speaking English, a language I had not heard from the lips of a woman for more than eight months. Was it a woman in the flesh or was it an angel? Had I already passed to the Great Beyond? I was afraid to open my eyes. The voice spoke again, softly. Surely it was an English voice and it *was* the voice of a woman. It was not sneering at me either because I was crying for my mother.

"Dear boy," that voice said, "what can I do to make you comfortable?"

A cool hand was laid upon my head. It was a soft little hand and felt just like another that many a time had been laid upon my head back in the days

when I was a little chap and mother had put me to bed.

"Dear boy," said that soft voice again, "what can I do for you?"

I opened my eyes. I was alive. I was not dreaming. Before me stood a little woman, clothed all in white with a big red cross on her. I looked at her as if she were a vision. I tried to speak but my lips only mumbled unintelligible things. Yet my mind was clear.

She calmed me and soothed me. By a great effort I managed to control myself enough to cry out: "I want my mother."

Then I fell to crying again. I watched her intently, this vision which to me then was the loveliest I had ever seen. I saw something shining in her hand, and in an instant I felt a slight pricking in my arm. In a few minutes I experienced a soothing sensation. The morphine she had injected was doing its work.

She asked me where my mother was, and by a great effort I managed to mumble her name and address.

"I understand," she said softly. "I'll write to her. I'll tell her what you want her to know. I understand."

And I knew she did understand. I could see it in her eyes. I could feel it in my heart. And she

did understand for she wrote to my mother that I had been wounded and was doing well. It was just what I wanted her to write. I had enough courage left in me to want that.

The morphine was at work now. I was relieved of pain and was much less nervous. I think I slept a little. Then I awakened. I was strapped to my stretcher lying on my right side. Just across from me lay a boy with his face half shot away. I saw a man approach. He climbed up to the boy and I saw him look at the lad's identification disk. He was a priest and he found by that disk that the lad was a Catholic. Then I heard him speak, oh, so softly and gently, so like a father to his son.

"My boy," he said, "do you want to make confession?"

Those blasted features tried to speak but could not. A very slight motion of the hand, the slightest nod of the head answered.

Then the priest began to ask questions.

"Have you lied?" he asked.

The boy nodded just a trifle.

"To hurt anybody?" asked the priest gently.

Just a negative movement of the head was the response.

"Have you taken the name of God in vain?"

A nod.



"Blasphemously?" was the question.

A negative indication.

And so the priest asked all the questions. Then he administered the sacrament and then he prayed. First he prayed in Latin, a stated prayer, then in English, the kind of prayer a father might offer for his son.

Then there came over that dreadfully distorted face a look of peace and happiness. Around the hole where should have been his mouth, something like a smile flickered. And then the lad sighed just once and was still.

I had not been able to take my eyes from the scene. How I wished somebody would come to pray for me. If a prayer could make that boy die in peace and happiness, I wanted somebody to pray for me, too, somebody to put me right with God, before I must face Him.

The priest climbed down, stood a moment as if undecided, and then to my amazement he came over to me, looked at my identification disk and saw upon it "P," meaning "Protestant." But he didn't go away as I feared he would.

"My boy," he said, and there was a world of tenderness in his voice. "You are not of my church but you are still one of my boys in this great world. Would you like me to pray for you?"

My great wish was to be granted. I nodded and he said:

"It is not according to your religion, but would you feel easier if you were to tell God of your sins?"

If that confession had made that poor lad across from me so happy, perhaps it would make me easier, too. I nodded.

Then he asked me the questions just as he had asked the boy and with nods I answered him. And then he prayed just as he had for the boy. I felt a great peace come over me; I felt stronger and better than I have ever felt. Surely his prayer had been answered. And when he left me, I followed him with my eyes as he went from stretcher to stretcher making all those men, Catholic and Protestant alike, at peace with their Maker.

Again I dozed and when I awakened there beside me once more was that vision of loveliness with the cool soft hand, the gentle voice and the red cross. She brought me tea and it strengthened me. Then she asked:

"Would you like a cigarette?"

I nodded. She placed one to my lips and held the match to it. I inhaled it and it helped. She stood there holding the cigarette for me as I smoked, for I could not use my hands and my lips trembled so it was difficult for me even to smoke as she held it. She

was tired I knew. Her nerves must have been racked by the sighs and sounds but she never complained, she never tired, she never was irritable. She was always sweet and kind and handled us as if we were babies.

One day she came in with a great mass of warm things to wear. Very tenderly she bundled me up and I knew I was to be moved away. Four of us were placed in one ambulance and as we drove away a Hun aviator circled overhead. Several times I heard violent explosions which nearly made me jump out of my skin. *Kultur* was demanding the bombing of hospitals.

We were loaded into a hospital train and were soon moving away out of sound of the guns which had been our music all these months. As the roar grew less and less distinct, I remember having thought: "I'm hearing you speak for the last time. Never again will I listen to you bark. Good-by, Fritz." And somewhere in my heart I wished he might be eternally damned.

At length I was placed in a great base hospital where there were thousands of other wounded men. We were all under canvas and now that the weather was getting fine, the walls of the tents were always furled up to let the sunshine in.

Beside the flag pin that I had always worn on my tunic, I had in my breast pocket a little silk Amer-

ican flag that my sister had sent me. My own country was now formally in the war and I was proud that throughout it all I had been carrying the flag of my country on the battle-fields of France. Now in this hospital I had asked my nurse to pin this little silk flag to the wall of the tent behind my cot. She did so and I was the proudest man in the ward.

Little Betty was the nurse. I can see her now, a wee bit of a thing with a heart as big as her body. I've watched her many a time with her teeth gritted hard together, her face white as marble, tears shining in her eyes, yet working nobly and ably to cure "her boys" of their hurts. She was a volunteer nurse and I could never understand how she stood all the work she did.

One day great news went flying through the hospital. The first American unit to arrive on French soil was here. It was a hospital unit and it was camped near the ward in which I lay. How I longed to see some of those American lads, to hear the Yankee drawl, to see the flag of my own country flying from a staff in France.

At last it was on French soil. I wanted to see it. Betty understood and made it her business to inform some of the men of that unit that an American, severely wounded, was lying in that base hospital. Then one day all my dreams came true.

A party of men entered the long tent and walked down through the broad aisle between the rows of cots. I saw the uniform of Uncle Sam. If only I had not been strapped down to that cot I would have jumped up and cheered. But all I could do was to mumble through my quivering lips. They saw my flag pinned to the tent wall and rushed toward me, great stalwart Americans, in the uniform of my own country, speaking my own tongue, a part of me.

They came to my cot and each man touched my hand—he dare not shake it. I could only look my appreciation and mumble a little, but my mind was clear. I knew them. They talked to me and that Yankee drawl was music to my ears. They left me American cigarettes. Every day some of them came to see me and then, one day, my next great wish was granted. For months I had been strapped to my cot and was moved just as little as possible. Now I was getting enough better so they took me out of the tent. Up there on a flag staff not far away waved Old Glory in the breeze. With the greatest effort of my life I managed to get my hand to my head. I saluted the flag of my country, waving over there in France.

You don't know what that sight meant to me. You can't understand how beautiful that flag looked to me. For two years and more I had heard all sorts

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PARTICULARS TO BE FILLED IN.

Name *P. J. McCoy*

Rank or occupation *Private*

Business

*Discharged Army Returning home  
(Commercial Salesman)*

Ship proceeding in *"Baltic"* Date of Sailing *22-12-17*

Signature of holder of Pass

*P. J. McCoy*

### Description.

(This MUST be filled in in all cases.)

\*Age (actual or apparent) 30.

\*Trade or Profession Commercial

Maiden Name of Widow or

Married Woman

\*Place and Date of Birth Holland  
Amsterdam N.S.A. Dec 15, 1881

\*Height 5 feet 10 inches

Forehead Broad.

Eyes blue-grey.

Nose blunt

Mouth large.

Chin Square

Colour of Hair dark brown

Complexion fresh

Face Full

\*Any special peculiarities

Gunshot wound left forearm

\* These particulars only need be given in the case of discharged soldiers.

When proceeding to destinations outside British Dominions a photograph of the holder must be attached to the pass, which will be stamped with an official perforating stamp partly on the photograph and partly on the permit.

This photograph will be provided affixed and stamped at the port of embarkation.



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Rank

for Director of Transports

Place of Issue

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of things about the "great yellow race," how "the president will write another note" and all that sort of thing and I had a lot of bloody noses to my credit. Now they couldn't say that again for the flag was here.

Then came a day three months later when I could be taken back to dear old Blighty. As I was carried out of the hospital, my stretcher was ringed around with American cigarettes. I think every man in that American hospital unit placed at least one American cigarette on my stretcher as he came to bid me good-bye.

Once more on a hospital train, to Boulogne and there put on a hospital ship. Here for the last time I saw evidences of Hun *kultur*. When I was on that other hospital train leaving the battle zone I thought I had heard the big guns for the last time, that I had for the last time been under fire, but once more though on a hospital ship I was to hear German guns, was to be under fire again.

We were placed on board the ship in the evening. All night we lay in the harbor ready for a quick dash across the Channel when daylight dawned. During the darkness a German sub came to the harbor entrance and began shelling our ship. There were many wounded Britishers and not a few wounded German prisoners, but that made no difference to the Hun.

He kept firing at us until finally chased away. One shot passed through the rigging and killed several persons on the quay. I learned, too, that the German prisoners on board got pretty cocky during the firing and had to be repressed with some force.

Next day we made the dash for England and arrived in safety. All the way across and even after we were on British soil, those who were able sang loudly that familiar old song: "Take me back to dear old Blighty." And we all meant it with all our hearts.

Seven months in the hospital at Manchester and I was ready to go. I was given an honorable discharge from the army and before many days was out on the Atlantic bound westward, toward the Statue of Liberty, toward the land of the free, toward home and mother.

THE END

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